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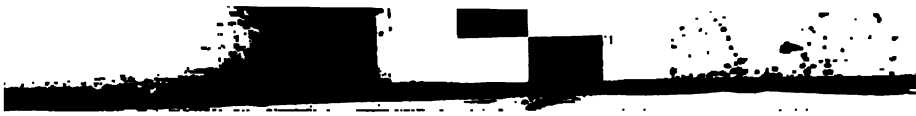
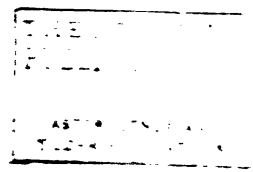
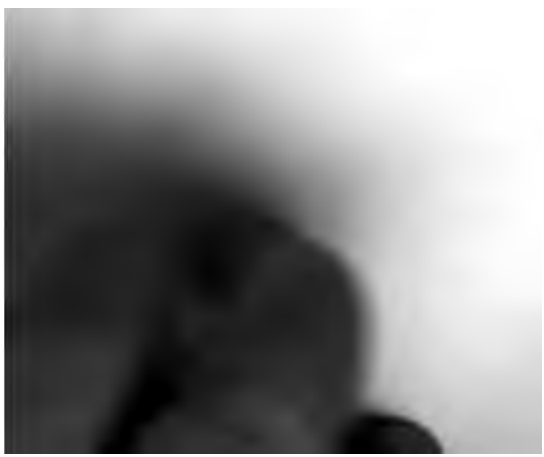


WESLEY AND HIS PREACHERS

Their Conquest of Britain

JOHN WESLEY AT THE AGE OF 63.
From a painting by Nathaniel Hone, R.A.
(Photo by Walker & Cockerell.)





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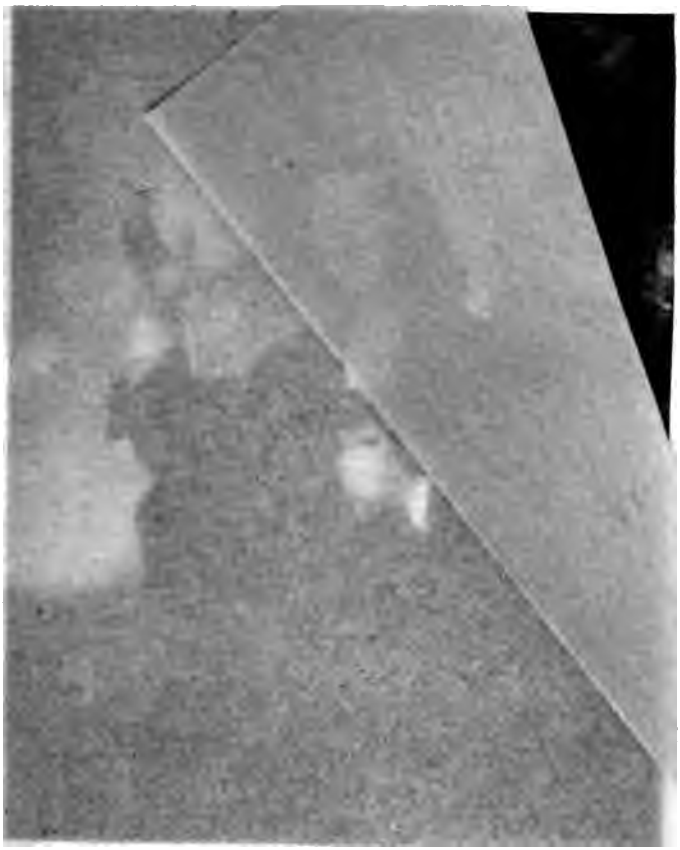

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Their Conquest of Britain

By G. HOLDEN PIKE

AUTHOR OF 'OLIVER CROMWELL AND HIS TIMES'
'FROM SLAVE TO COLLEGE PRESIDENT' ETC.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
PHILADELPHIA: J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1903

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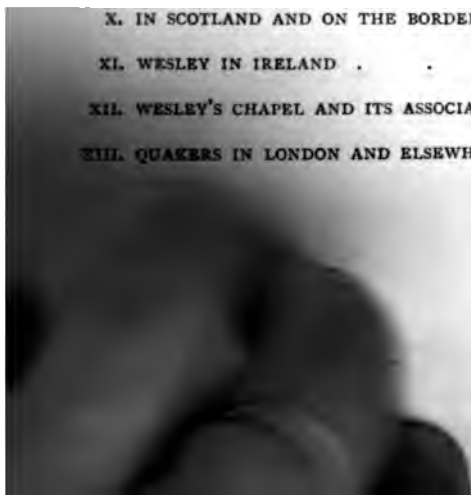

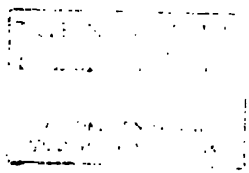

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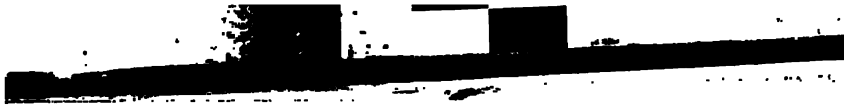

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WESLEY
AND HIS PREACHERS

CHAPTER I

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAN

WHILE passing along Bishopsgate Street on a summer day in the first year of the twentieth century, I saw with some regret that the Wesleyan Centenary Hall and Mission House had been taken down. The building was, during its not very long life of sixty years, a notable landmark, reminding everyone who looked upon it of the mighty conquests which had been made in Britain during the Great Revival of the eighteenth century.

The centenary of Methodism was worthy of being commemorated; but on June 28, 1903, will occur the bi-centenary of the birth of John Wesley himself, a man who, during his long working life, earned the distinction of being the most successful of open-air preachers, as well as a veritable apostle of the British Isles. Such an

evangelist seemed to be raised up to continue the work which Puritanism in the preceding century had left unfinished; for, in the reaction of general ungodliness and ignorance, the Gospel seemed to have become as obsolete even in the churches as it was in the homes of the people. Even old-time Christian customs had been so far forgotten that when reintroduced they were regarded as innovations. Thus open-air preaching, which had been one of the commonplaces of primitive times, came to be regarded as 'disorderly'; but when the clergy were indifferent, and their churches were generally unfrequented by the main part of the people, earnest open-air preachers were urgently needed. Although born to be a leader of men, it was still characteristic of Wesley that he could follow the lead of another when any advantage was to be gained. His temperament and education both tended to bias him against open-air preaching; but the striking success which had attended Whitefield's experiment killed such prejudice as remained against this method of offering the Gospel to the common people.

In his own department Wesley might rank as the greatest evangelist of his time, although he came behind Whitefield as an orator, while he was not so good a poet as his brother Charles. He was a scholar, however, and was no mean literary critic; but he may not have been what would now be called a theologian. He was no doubt a close observer of everyday life; and quite understood that in gaining a knowledge of human nature he

must begin with himself. When past his sixtieth year he mentions some of his own characteristics as things for which he is unable to account. Thus a tune at first hearing, a poem at first reading, a picture at first seeing, did not afford pleasure, as was the case afterwards when the merits were more fully realised. This applied 'in all the objects of imagination,' but only to a certain point; 'for when I am too much acquainted, it is no longer pleasing.' Nothing short of shrewd and constant observation enabled one imperfectly to understand 'the machine which we carry about with us.'

Wesley was pre-eminently a man of his times, the eighteenth century; but in style as a preacher and writer he was in advance of that artificial age. While he had sufficient courage to regard 'Mr. Pope' as a true poet, he was no more captivated by the artificial style and 'classic' rhetoric of the time than some other good writers. 'I do not admire that florid way of writing,' he remarks, in regard to one who wrote in the conventional style. 'Good sense does not need to be so studiously adorned. I love St. John's style as well as matter.' It would have been well for themselves, and no small gain to their hearers and readers, if other contemporary divines had shown enough of common sense to borrow their style from the Authorised Version of the Bible rather than from poets who were unacquainted with nature and rhetorical essayists and historians. The condition of the country was indeed low when in the early days of the Revival the Scriptures would be spoken of as

a book which contained 'a good deal of morality and good sense'; and when persons who supposed themselves to be educated had not enough of discernment to see that the Book was the most perfect standard of the language which time would ever give the nation. 'A noble earl' even undertook to improve the translation; and a prevailing opinion was that this 'would meet with universal approbation.' Hence we see that a great leader in a new reformation, like Wesley, had to correct popular follies as well as to call the people to repentance. In this, as well as in regard to many other of his characteristics, Wesley was far, indeed, in advance of his time.

Too often long sermons have come from dull preachers. Wesley was not disposed to prolong a discourse unless something really needed to be said; and in that case he would venture to hold on for an hour or more. In this, as well as in numberless other instances, he showed that rare tact in adapting his methods to circumstances which may come of rare genius. To his keen eye cranks, or mere eccentricities, did not pass for men of original mettle. When he once heard of the artless confession of 'a good man' that he burned his MSS. once in seven years because it would be discreditable not to do better as he grew older, Wesley was ingenuous enough to say that he had found it otherwise. At the age of seventy-five he was not conscious of capacity to work better than he had done forty years previously. Through wider reading he had more knowledge of history

and of natural philosophy, but there was no addition to acquirements in divinity—'Forty years ago I knew and preached every Christian doctrine which I preach now.' Realising that he was a messenger to the multitude, he liked best to have the common people for a following. Whenever he associated with fashionable people—as, for example, when he attended a concert which had been arranged by his nephews—he felt so much out of his element that he was glad to retire. His great tact and readiness of speech enabled him to adapt the tone of his message to the needs of any place or of any class he visited.

It may be taken for granted that no evangelist, either before or since Wesley's time, ever so thoroughly traversed these three kingdoms to become so well acquainted with the characteristics of the different towns. How great was the contrast between North and South. Some will remember that in his early days, even C. H. Spurgeon did not succeed with the people of the far north. It was similar in the case of Wesley. 'I am not a preacher to the people of Edinburgh,' he once remarked; and some time later he added, 'I almost wonder at myself. I seldom speak anywhere so roughly as in Scotland.'

Neither as a preacher nor as a worker would Wesley have presumed to pose as a model to his followers; but at the same time there was not one of his helpers who was competent to keep pace with him. 'My study hours' in Wesley's case were over twelve hours a day; and he mentioned

the obvious fact—'I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes.' It is so far reassuring that such a worker put some restriction on his powers of endurance. At the same time he had a discerning eye to see where the shoe pinched whenever any irregularity occurred. Thus 'long and loud preaching' meant early disablement, and all were warned against habits which wore out the strength without giving back any corresponding advantages. His prescription for 'nervous disorders'—no supper save 'a little milk or water gruel'—might not be less effective now than it was of old. One difficult thing was to maintain the approved Methodist custom of preaching at 5 a.m., or an hour earlier on festival days! Those who lodged at headquarters in the City Road were required to retire to bed at nine. There must be no excuse for late rising!

One of Wesley's lovable characteristics was that in controversy he never gave opponents cause to complain of rough language or rudeness. Those who opposed or wrote against him ranged from gross and profane men of the street to bishops and squires. At times he might have cause to complain even of some whom he would have been glad to reckon among allies. Thus the outlook at Grimsby in 1779 provoked him to say: 'Those striplings who call themselves Lady Huntingdon's preachers have greatly hindered the work of God.' Then at Congleton, three years later: 'I found the Calvinists were just breaking in and making havoc of the flock.' What was regarded as lack

of brotherly love affected him more than grosser things from the common enemy. A thoroughly diabolical case occurred at Bridlington in 1779: 'A gentleman of the town had a favourite daughter, whom he set up in a milliner's shop. Some time after she had a concern for her soul, and believed it to be her duty to enter into the Society. Upon this her *good* father forbade her his house; demanding all the money he had laid out; and required her instantly to sell all her goods in order to make the payment!'

It is no less suggestive than interesting to take note of what Wesley thought about some of his more eminent contemporaries. He refers to Smollett as 'this frontless man, blind and bold,' who stumbled on 'without the least shadow of truth.' Baron Swedenborg was originally a man of piety, of a strong understanding and most lively imagination; but through his mind being affected by fever in middle age his later works were 'a madman's dreams.' Although Wesley's methods of working, his notions of things, and his literary style were so different, Dr. Johnson was regarded as a 'great man,' who in 1784 was 'sinking into the grave by a gentle decay.' He may have had some sympathy with the poet Shenstone, who, disappointed with the world and his friends in it, 'died at forty-eight, probably of a broken heart.' Pascal Paoli, who no doubt was a hero to all his fellow members of the Literary Club, was 'the modern Hannibal . . . probably the most accomplished General that is now in the world.' Black-

burne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, had fathered certain liberal opinions, and it was even thought that he might accept the pastorate of a certain great Nonconformist Church in London. Although two years younger than Wesley, he was at eighty-four 'blind, deaf, and lame' with age. What was still worse, 'he durst not ask me to preach in his church "for fear somebody should be offended."' Howard, as a philanthropist, was thought to be 'one of the greatest men in Europe'; one whom the power of God alone could sustain in his hazardous employment. Whitefield was also one of those who wore out fast; for while Wesley's powers were still undiminished, Lady Huntingdon's chaplain 'seemed to be an old, old man, being fairly worn out in his Master's service, though he has hardly seen fifty years.' Wesley was as little pleased with Jean Jacques Rousseau's work on Education as the Archbishop of Paris, who condemned it, or the French Parliament, which ordered the book to be burned, *e.g.* 'Sure a more conceited coxcomb never saw the sun. How amazingly full of himself. Whatever he speaks he pronounces as an oracle.' Elsewhere he reproves a Scottish divine for admiring one who was 'shallow, but a supercilious infidel two degrees below Voltaire.' But small hope was harboured of convincing such by argument; and hence 'that fine book,' Butler's *Analogy*, was apt to fail in its mission — 'Freethinkers, so-called, are seldom close thinkers. They will not be at the pains of reading such a book as this.' His

reading over Dr. Erskine's work on Saving Faith naturally suggested 'how marvellously small is the difference between us.' Dr. Robertson's *Charles V.* was regarded as dry and verbose, and otherwise disappointing. 'It might as well be called the History of Alexander the Great.' The narratives of Captain Cook were supposed to have hardly more of truth in them than *Robinson Crusoe.* If Lord Herbert of Cherbury was the father of English Deism, he was also a wild knight-errant, compared with whom 'Don Quixote was a sober man.' Leibnitz was a poor writer, 'haughty, self-conceited, sour, impatient of contradiction.' Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* was 'not sense . . . One fool makes many.' Swift's *Letters* were rated at their true value—'Was ever such trash palmed upon the world under the name of a great man?' Lord Chesterfield was 'a man of much wit, middling sense, and some learning'; but morally he was degraded, while he seemed to be an unbeliever. While he was nothing more than a minute philosopher, David Hume was 'the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world.' Among Nonconformists in those days, Dr. Richard Price was a leading patriot; but Wesley thought that if they were adopted, his principles would bring in a reign of anarchy. Rowland Hill lived to regret the violent language he had used in controversy. After reading a pamphlet by the future pastor of Surrey Chapel, published in 1777, Wesley said that, 'compared with him Mr. Toplady

himself is a very civil, fair-spoken gentleman.' Wesley had a better opinion of David Garrick than others of his contemporaries. Thus when an anecdote became current to the effect that David had thrown a copy of Wesley's Hymns into the sea, Wesley refused to believe such a report, and remarked: 'He (Garrick) knew my brother well; and he knew him to be not only far superior in learning, but in poetry, to Mr. Thomson and all his theatrical writers put together. None of them can equal him, either in strong, nervous sense, or purity and elegance of language. The musical compositions of his sons are not more excellent than the poetical ones of their father.'

In political sympathies Wesley's Diary shows him to have been a strong Royalist, who regarded with much favour each of the three Georges under whom he lived, while his hereditary bias would be in favour of the Stuarts. He believed Mary Queen of Scots to have been an injured woman, but judged more impartially of those who came after. Thus James I. was 'a covetous and bloodthirsty tyrant,' who in the Gowrie conspiracy was a murderer and a robber. He believed that the chief offence which cost Charles I. his head was 'his persecuting the real Christians.' At the time of George II.'s death, Wesley asked, 'When will England have a better prince?' Some time before the king passed away Wesley had seen him in the House of Lords: 'His brow was much furrowed with age, and quite clouded with care. . . . A blanket of ermine round his shoulders, so heavy

and burdensome he could scarce move under it. An huge heap of borrowed hair with a few plates of gold and glittering stars upon his head!' Wesley fully sympathised with the king and his ministers in that disastrous war which resulted in the loss of the American Colonies. He once heard George III. speak from the throne in the House of Lords: 'How agreeably was I surprised. He pronounced every word with exact propriety. I much doubt whether there be any other king in Europe that is so just and natural a speaker.' As compared with their head, however, the peers were a degenerate race: 'I spent two or three hours in the House of Lords. I had frequently heard that this was the most venerable assembly in Europe. But how was I disappointed! What is a lord but a sinner born to die?'

In the best sense Wesley was an interested sightseer, whether in London or during his travels over the British Isles; he was a close observer of nature; he studied men and women. In his old age he visited the Museum in Spring Gardens, which contained models in wax of several eighteenth-century monarchs. He speaks of these like a shrewd reader of character. At that time Frederick the Great of Prussia had only recently died; the explosion of the French Revolution was only a few months ahead. Of Pope Clement XIV. Wesley remarks, in his characteristic way, 'Strange that such a man should be suffered to sit two years in the Papal chair!' It was Clement who suppressed the Jesuits as a danger no longer to be

tolerated; and since his death in 1775 he has generally been regarded as one of the best of the popes. Wesley naturally thought that such a man was too good for his office. As many supposed, Clement died of poison; and whether or no he fell a victim to Jesuitical intrigue, it was natural that the popular inference should be that he really did do so. Of others, Wesley says: 'Sense and majesty appear in the King of Spain; dulness and sottishness in the King of France; infernal subtlety in the late King of Prussia (as well as in the skeleton Voltaire); calmness and humanity in the Emperor and King of Portugal; exquisite stupidity in the Prince of Orange; and amazing coarseness, with everything that is unamiable, in the Czarina.'

Many examples might be given of the interest which Wesley showed in visiting ancient sites and scenes, and of his correct realisation of their peculiar features. He was also boldly outspoken enough to say what he really thought even of the greatest masters, not excepting Raphael. Thus, while he was a great painter, the Italian artist was but a poor designer; so that after seeing 'the celebrated cartoons,' Wesley remarked, 'O that so fine a painter should be utterly devoid of common sense.' What was meant was, that the figures were not natural. As a home of the Cecils, Hatfield House was a grand place, but with the exception of the pictures the furniture was nothing more than 'just such as I should expect in a gentleman's house of five hundred a year.'

Wesley's mastery of Latin enabled him to converse with foreign scholars whom he occasionally met. He had a keen eye for observing national manners and customs in countries through which he passed, and he has something of Boswell's charm in describing them. In 1786, at the age of eighty-three, he travelled through Holland, and refers to the mode of serving supper in a Christian household at Haerlem: 'The manner was peculiar: no tablecloth was used, but plates, with knives and forks and napkins to each person, and fifteen or sixteen small ones, on which were bread, butter, cheese, slices of hung beef, cakes, pancakes, and fruits of various kinds. To these were added music upon an excellent organ, one of the sweetest tones I ever heard.' Another word-picture concerning repasts relates to a dinner at the palace of the Bishop of Exeter in 1782: 'I could not but observe: 1. The lovely situation of the palace, covered with trees, and as rural a retreat and as retired as if it was quite in the country. 2. The plainness of the furniture, not costly or showy, but just fit for a Christian Bishop. 3. The dinner, sufficient, but not redundant; plain and good, but not delicate. 4. The propriety of the company—five clergymen and four of the aldermen; and, 5. The genuine unaffected courtesy of the Bishop, who I hope will be a blessing to his whole diocese.' Wesley is also quite as charmingly communicative when describing how he dined with the Bishop of Londonderry at Whitsuntide 1775: 'The Bishop invited me to dinner, and told me,

"I know you do not love our hours, and will therefore order dinner to be on table between two and three o'clock." We had a piece of boiled beef and an English pudding. This is true good breeding. The Bishop is entirely easy and unaffected in his whole behaviour, exemplary in all parts of public worship and plenteous in good works.'

Certain of Wesley's more distinguishing characteristics may be briefly mentioned. While he belonged to a family which showed some musical genius, he is found frequently disapproving of the common methods of singing. He liked oratorios; and even thought that the performance of 'Ruth' might 'possibly make an impression even upon rich and honourable sinners.' He believed in the reality of apparitions and witchcraft; he gives what look like striking instances of supernatural appearances, and in connection with the other he says: 'I cannot give up to all the Deists in Great Britain the existence of witchcraft till I give up the credit of all history, sacred and profane.' Modern readers will not be surprised that on account of such another ingenuous statement in regard to astronomy he was called to account in 'a warm letter' in the *London Magazine* of 1765. All strictures were as water on a duck's back, however; they produced no impression. 'I cannot help it' was his equally ingenuous reply. 'Nay, the more I consider the more my doubts increase. So that at present I doubt whether any man on earth knows either the distance or magnitude, I

will not say of a fixed star, but of Saturn or Jupiter; yea, of the sun or moon.'

On the other hand, he had that unbounded faith in the health-restoring powers of electricity which the additional experience of more than a century has not proved to have been well founded. To Wesley electricity was nothing less than 'a thousand medicines in one'; it was 'the most efficacious medicine in nervous disorders of any kind which has ever yet been discovered.' Still, temperance was more than anything else conducive to health. Merely to say that he was temperate in all things might conceal the fact that he was abstemious to a degree that might be called fastidious, but which no doubt had much to do with the perfect health he enjoyed right on to old age. He would seem to reprove himself even when he had kept on the safe side of self-indulgence. On leaving one household in which he was made much of, he remarks: 'I can trust myself about once a year in this warm sunshine; but not much oftener, or I should melt away.'

At sixty years of age he had outgrown his hereditary High Church prejudices. He was hard-driven, indeed, before he could be reconciled to the practice of open-air preaching; but so completely had his views changed that he held that the holding of divine service in a building was sufficient consecration. 'This is the only consecration of any church in Great Britain which is necessary, or even lawful,' he said. 'It is true, Archbishop Laud composed a form of consecration,

but it was never allowed, much less established, in England. Let this be remembered by all who talk so idly of preaching in unconsecrated places.' It may be that Wesley held similar views twenty or thirty years previously; but when, being past middle age, he still preached eight hundred sermons a year, he cared little about the ecclesiastical character of the building in which he ministered, or whether he had a building at all. It seems to have been characteristic of Wesley that preaching twice a day, with extra duty on Sundays, had a bracing effect upon him. It was otherwise with Whitefield. The experience of both preachers varied as they grew older. Instead of churches being closed against them, there were more invitations to preach than could be accepted. The even temper of Wesley served him under all trials. We see this on all occasions. The refusal to allow of his preaching in Haworth Church was as keenly felt as his being denied the Lord's Supper in his father's parish of Epworth.

To this acute observer of human nature the great variety of persons he met with not only served to widen his own knowledge, but to show to advantage his own characteristics. Thus at Kirton in the Midlands, in 1780, a 'very serious congregation' still contained 'one, something like a gentleman, with his hat on even at prayer.' Then an outdoor service is disturbed by a noisy drunkard; but Wesley was too much of a humorist not to be amused when the man's wife 'seized him by the collar, gave him two or three

hearty boxes on the ears, and dragged him away like a calf.' His meekness and long-suffering were perhaps more apparent than at any other time when he was subjected to abuse in the street from individual opponents. On the other hand, gratitude was sometimes stimulated by more cheering adventures. On one occasion 'a white-headed old man,' encountered on the road in Cornwall, in 1782, asked, 'Sir, do you not know me?' 'No.' 'My father, my father, I am poor John Trembath!' He had been converted; he had prospered; he was happier than he had ever before been in his life!

A very notable characteristic of Wesley was seen in the sympathy he felt for all repentant sinners. While this was well known and appreciated by large numbers of the more humble sort, we find that others of a higher grade valued his services and wished him to visit them. Both the judicially murdered Dr. William Dodd, and Lord George Gordon of the No Popery Riots, came in for a share of attention. The former was found to be in a most desirable frame of mind; the nobleman was well acquainted with Scripture, while his apartment in the Tower was well-furnished with other books.

Because Dr. Johnson's sight was too defective to enable him to see a landscape, many affected people may have thought it gave them a 'classical' air to ignore the beauties of nature. It was quite otherwise with Wesley, however; neither in writing nor speaking did he ever yield to the false taste of

the age. Then, as regards nature, in his constant travels how captivated he often was with a more than usually picturesque spot; but although he would sometimes come to a place where he would fain have stayed if earthly enjoyment had been his object, his best-loved retreat was Lewisham, although there were other quiet havens where he was equally welcome. In his later years he found a pleasantly situated house at Hinxworth in Hertfordshire, where leading off from the garden was 'a shady walk around the neighbouring meadows.' The prince of English itinerant preachers was wont to take notice of such desirable retreats, and what he said of one he really thought of many others: 'Gladly would I repose awhile here. But repose is not for me in this world.' For such a retreat as that of his friend's house at Lewisham he would contract strong affection, so that a final farewell would be quite a pathetic experience. Thus, in regard to the place just mentioned we find this record: 'We took one more walk round the garden and meadow, which he took so much pains to improve. Upwards of forty years this has been my place of retirement, when I could spare two or three days from London.'

One enviable characteristic was the ability to remain undisturbed in all kinds of experience. If he suffered loss through the death of friends or in temporal things, he recognised the fact that all things were ordered by God for the best. When false reports were afloat, at times reflecting on his

moral character, he could also preserve an even temperament, because even his reputation was in God's keeping. Thus it was commonly said that Wesley received a large pension for having defended the Government policy in the American War!

Wesley was able to correct the popular notion that nightingales would not live in cages; but it would have been more satisfactory had he protested against the cruelty of confining such songsters of the open air in barred prisons. When, however, any timely protest was made against certain usages or bad customs, they were sure to be outspoken. Thus, to Wesley, kneeling was the only allowable attitude at prayer; and after-service talk in church was a habit to be condemned. To him Methodism was the acme of Christian liberty; but when the members prospered in the world, the dangers of wealth had more terrors to their leader than the trials of adversity. Want of faith in the medical men of the time was also characteristic of Wesley; the failure of their modes of treatment were too apparent not to be noticed. Still it was evident that while he could correct mistakes or omissions in some directions, he was himself too credulous in others. In some so-called Medical Essays three persons were mentioned who had been cured of dropsy, and all by truly extraordinary means: 'One by drinking six quarts a day of cold water; the second by drinking two or three gallons of new cider; the third by drinking a gallon or two of small beer, and the same quantity of butter-milk!' One who believed in such a story might well ask,

'What are we doing in keeping dropsical persons from small drink?' It was 'the same as keeping persons in the small-pox from air.' In regard to the treatment of the last-named disease, Wesley showed more knowledge than the ordinary surgeon of his day; and in proof we need only quote one of his adventures in January 1773: 'I called where a child was dying of the small-pox, and rescued her from death and doctors, who were giving her saffron, etc., to drive them out! Can anyone be so ignorant still?' In another case a patient was advised not to take any more of the prescribed medicine. In one case, in which no medicine of any kind took effect, it was feared that the patient had 'sinned a sin unto death!'

The facts and incidents which have been referred to in some measure show John Wesley as he was by revealing his characteristics. We realise that he was a man before his time in all things save politics, otherwise, that emphatically he represents the best side of life in the eighteenth century. As an itinerant preacher of the Word, he may well rank as a chief apostle of England; for certainly no other Englishman either before or after him has done so extensive or comprehensive a work in organising and carrying out a plan for carrying the Gospel to the people of these three kingdoms.

THE FOUNDERY, MOORFIELDS.

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CHAPTER II

THE EARLY ASSISTANT PREACHERS

ALTHOUGH a few distinguished men, of whom Wesley was the chief, were leaders during the Revival of the eighteenth century, it will, of course, always be borne in mind that the general results would have fallen far short of what they actually were if there had not been available a band of earnest itinerant preachers. The enthusiasm of these men, their Scripture knowledge, and, above all, their supreme faith in the adequacy of the Gospel to meet the needs of man and of the times, enabled them to do service which may be said to abide until this day, notwithstanding that the majority were, in a very literal sense, what Wesley calls 'unlettered men.' They were worthy of their leaders and of the cause; and brave as they were, they well knew that those above them did not ask that perils and inconvenience should be risked which they were themselves not willing to share. The rank and file caught the spirit of their General.

In the good providence of God, obstacles to the progress of the cause were one by one over-

come. At first field-preaching seemed to promise to become a very serious difficulty; but when once well begun, objections disappeared like mist before the morning sun. Then, at first, it did not seem to be in accordance with Christian order to allow unordained men to preach the Gospel; and no one knows what would have happened if the humble preachers had asked Wesley's advice instead of making a beginning on their own account. On discovering what was taking place, Wesley was somewhat disconcerted; but providentially, as it may well seem to us, at that time he still had a mother who was able to give him some sound advice on the subject. That sagacious woman saw that a number of extra preachers would be needed in connection with the great movement which was going forward, and Wesley soon saw that his mother was right. For him to have persevered in his objections to the practice of the travelling preachers would have been to handicap himself in his great mission. It always happens so in any great evangelical movement. When the late C. H. Spurgeon commenced his great work in London, he found that here and there young men converts commenced to preach; and in order to control them, and to prevent their running wild, he founded a college. Wesley also realised that the preachers whom he once feared might tend to promote confusion were allies to whom the work would have to be largely indebted. It hardly concerns us to decide the question as to who was the first Methodist preacher

to take to the work at the outset of the Revival; but we may notice some of those who stand out more prominently in a long and honourable succession.

Among these worthies, John Nelson, 1707–1774, strikes one as being a man *sui generis*. A stonemason by trade, he possessed great physical strength, while in his unconverted state his evil passions appear to have been correspondingly strong. He was a Yorkshireman, who seemed to be specially fitted to carry the Gospel to those of his own order in the North. His conversion was a long and painful process, reminding one of a man who, after floundering for a time in the Slough of Despond, at last got out only to fall in again. He mentions 'my poor sin-sick soul' in a way which shows how much he suffered more forcibly than any description. He sought relief by going to church, or by going 'to hear Dissenters of all denominations, but to no purpose.' He even tried the Roman Catholics; 'but was soon surfeited with their way of worship.' He would even have followed the Quakers, if by so doing he could have ensured peace of mind. At last, when he had 'tried all but the Jews,' he returned to the Established Church, apparently thinking that he must at least keep within Christian boundaries.

At that time Moorfields, just outside the City, was becoming, as it were, one of the chief battlefields of the Revival. When Whitefield came there to dispute the ground with the enemy, Nelson stood in the crowd, and listened to the

great orator 'as a man who could play well on an instrument'; but though he grew in love with the preacher, and would have knocked down anyone who had ventured to molest him, he found no relief. He evidently lapsed into a highly nervous state; he seemed to be maintaining an unequal struggle with invisible foes by day, and when sleep came to him at all by night, he would dream that he was 'falling into some horrible place,' or was actually fighting with the devil—'I was like a wandering bird cast out of the nest.'

Then the scene changes; and this time it is not Whitefield, but 'Mr. John Wesley' who comes 'to preach his first sermon in Moorfields,' and a new day of promise seemed to dawn for John Nelson, who vividly depicts the preacher:—

'As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done, I said, "This man can tell the secrets of my heart; he hath not left me there; for he hath showed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus."'

But the great change did not occur there and then; Nelson fell into gross sins, and still had many sore conflicts. In regard to his yielding to temptations to the grossest lewdness, he is a poor contrast to many others under similar conditions.

Meanwhile Nelson's friends expressed their sorrow at what had occurred; and while some said they 'should be glad to knock Mr. Wesley's brains out' for thus making divisions in families, others would not hear him preach 'for fifty pounds' lest they should also become infected. Nelson was well satisfied that the Moorfields preacher understood his case, however, although for lack of the knowledge which all should possess, that in Christ God is reconciling the world unto Himself, the process of conversion was both tedious and distressing—temptation by day and hideous dreams by night, and on one occasion he seemed to see the Evil One, 'in the shape of a red bull, running through the people, as a beast runs through the standing corn.'

It seems to have been before he was settled in the faith that Nelson had to proceed to Guildford to do some work at the seat of Lord Onslow, which occupied him during some months, and he then encountered the Speaker, who held his post for about a third of a century and retired in 1760:—

'One day the Speaker of the House of Commons came to visit my lord; and taking a view of the work, he asked me many questions about it, which I answered as well as I could. He said: "This is a fine house, and a fine estate of land about it! But what will it signify? For a piece of land six feet long and three broad, will fit me shortly." He then fetched a deep sigh, went away, and walked alone among the trees.'

When he returned to London, Nelson came in

contact with the Moravians, and, as was the case with Wesley himself, his adventures with those extreme sectarians were quite extraordinary. He had formerly had some slight acquaintance with certain individuals who even sought him out in his London lodgings, and the poor preacher artlessly thought that to have Christian friends seek him out, through the love they bore to him, 'was the thing I longed for.' When he made inquiry concerning his 'good friend Mr. Wesley,' he was told that he was 'wandering in the dark,' as 'a blind leader of the blind who preached law and works.' This, and much more of an outrageous kind, had the effect of driving Nelson to the Scriptures for enlightenment and to prayer.

Being of great physical strength, and accustomed to work as a stone-mason in different parts of the country, Nelson was not greatly inconvenienced by having to endure hardness as an itinerant preacher. As an occasional companion on the road, he must have had reminiscences of many adventures which would have been good reading had he possessed sufficient literary tact to tell of them. In the early days of the Revival, when the conquest of Cornwall was in progress, Nelson worked for a time near Land's End, and he accompanied Wesley in preaching excursions around St. Ives:—

'All that time Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor: he had my greatcoat for a pillow, and I had Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning about three o'clock Mr. Wesley turned over, and,

finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer: I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on one side." We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom anyone asked us to eat and drink. One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, and Mr. Wesley had preached from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people as he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst I ever saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?" I said, "I know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something as I came from St. Just, when I ate heartily of barley bread and honey." He said, "You are well off: I had a thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman where I met the people of Morva, but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house."'

The darkness of the people in those distant villages seems in some cases to have been even surpassed by the ignorance of their State-appointed teachers. Thus, in one Cornish church, Nelson heard a clergyman describe the Methodists as 'a people who hold that damnable Popish doctrine of justification by faith!'

From this it appears that even such unlettered teachers as John Nelson—who was well versed in

the Scriptures—were needed. One of the most determined attempts to put an end to his preaching was the infamous conspiracy to press him for service in the army. He died in 1774.

Christopher Hopper, 1722–1802, had more force of mind than usually characterised the travelling preachers. He also had more education; for after he had 'learned to read and write,' he showed the ambition of a North Country man by striving to 'understand a little of the mathematics.' His first schoolmaster was 'a man of piety and good understanding,' who paid strict attention to the religious training of his pupils. Eventually, however, as the preacher tells us in his Autobiography, his 'beloved master . . . made a most awful exit.'

'. . . A few gentlemen, with fair words, persuaded him to play a civil game at cards; but afterwards he fell into great distress of mind, and could not properly attend his school, which was often left to the care of his eldest son and me. The spring following, after many sore conflicts, he sank into deep despair, and then drowned himself.'

Although Hopper paid much attention to religion in youth, the Anglican legalism of the day seems to have had a strong hold of him. He was 'addicted to swear . . . when put out of humour'; and 'to lie' when gain could be made by it, while he was also somewhat cruel to dumb creatures, and 'very proud and prone to anger.' When, in due time, he heard 'one, Wesley,' it seemed as though his heart was touched; but he tried a stricter life until a genuine change enabled

him to understand the nature of true religion. He was then much exercised as to whether or not he should undertake the work of preaching. He soon decided, and had a liking for the service; 'but Satan did not like this work,' and so stirred up enemies. As had been the case with Dr. Doddridge some few years before, he was summoned before the Spiritual Court to answer for assumed malpractices, an illegal interference with his liberty which was abhorrent to the King and his Ministers.

When this all ended satisfactorily, the preacher 'met with a trial of another kind,' which reminds us that his class were commonly careful in the matter of marriage. 'An agreeable young woman . . . had laid fast hold' of him; but he would not have married her if she had not 'found peace with God.'

A man of this mettle was ardently devoted to his work; and, as in Hopper's case, would even give up a secular calling in order to infuse more of enthusiasm into it. Doing this even showed some heroism, and it might even involve strong temptation. 'I well remember,' says Hopper, 'once on the top of a cold mountain, in a violent storm of snow, when the congealed flakes covered me with a white mantle, Satan assaulted me, and pushed me hard to return to my school, or some other business, to procure bread.' At one time, as he tells us, 'I saw nothing before me but beggary and great afflictions.' Very small allowances were made for meals on the road and for baiting the horse; but

apart from this, the quarterly allowance for a preacher and his wife was £5, 10s., or £3 for a single man. It was quite natural that these Spartan rates preserved the preachers' ranks from hypocritical pretenders.

In strength given them by God, such men as this carried the Gospel message into out-of-the-way places where nothing seemed to relieve the moral darkness; but where it has ever since burned strong and clear. This is Hopper's delightfully graphic description of 'the beginning of a good work in Weardale':—

'It was in a storm of snow that we crossed the quagmires and enormous mountains. When we came into the Dales, we met with a very cold reception. The enemy had barricaded the place, and made his bulwarks strong. But the Lord made way for His truth. He opened the heart of a poor Scotch shepherd to receive us into his little thatched cabin, where we lodged all night. The next day I preached under the walls of an old castle. A few children and two or three old women attended, who looked hard at us. When I had done, we followed them into their houses, and talked freely to them in their own language about the Kingdom of God. They heard, and obeyed the Gospel. The next evening I had a large congregation, who heard me with much attention and received the word gladly. Some time after I preached in private houses, alehouses, cock-pits, or wherever I could find a door open. The fire then spread from heart to heart, and God was glorified.'

The hardships which these men endured upon the road would not now willingly be endured by any travelling preacher. Thus, in January 1780, Hopper met with 'a perfect hurricane at Bacup'; and amid 'mountains of snow' he had to accept shelter in a cottage 'with little fire and small provisions.' In summer, life on the road was diversified, daily experience at times consisting in a contrast to all this—'Thunder and lightning, one tremendous clap after another, from ten o'clock till one in the morning, as if the heavens and earth had been in one flame.'

Having more scholarship, and being more of what would now be called a gentleman than the majority of his comrades, Hopper preached up and down the three kingdoms for nearly half a century, at times being in company with Wesley himself, whom he styles 'a singular character.'

Thomas Mitchell, 1726–1785, was a man of very ordinary abilities and of very defective education, but he might have been called most emphatically a good soldier of Jesus Christ. On one occasion he had even had Dr. Priestley for a hearer, and after the service the philosophic Unitarian remarked to a friend, 'This man must do good, for he aims at nothing else.' In his younger days Mitchell benefited by the preaching of John Nelson, but probably much more by the teaching and advice of Grimshaw of Haworth. Mitchell was in active service as a preacher during what may be called the heroic period of the Methodist Revival. At different times he suffered much from

the ill-treatment of raging mobs, which were encouraged by the clergy and others who were supposed to exercise their authority in the interest of law and order. As the doings of mobs, and oftentimes the action of the magistrates themselves, were quite contrary to law, Wesley at various periods taught such opponents a salutary lesson in the Court of King's Bench. On one occasion Mitchell imitated the procedure of his leader in this respect by having writs sent down for five ringleaders of riot and outrage in Sussex, which had the effect of so thoroughly unnerving those cowardly miscreants, that the county became free from such outrages so far as the preachers were concerned.

Peter Jaco, 1729–1781, describes himself as being 'of a gay, lively disposition,' while a friend adds, that 'he was remarkably comely in his person.' Even in his unconverted state, Jaco was quite a champion for fairplay; and on one occasion he was known even to assist in fighting a mob which threatened to molest Wesley. He had good talents but uncertain health, so that he passed away in middle age. It was at Wesley's request that two or three years before his death, Jaco wrote out an account of his life, and he shows that the hardships he had to undergo were great, while the difficulties in the way of success were formidable, *e.g.*:—

'In some places the work was to begin; and in most places, being in its infancy, we had hardly the necessaries of life; so that after preaching

three or four times a day, and riding thirty or forty miles, I have often been thankful for a little clean straw, with a cânvas sheet to lie on. Very frequently we had also violent oppositions. At Warrington I was struck so violently with a brick on the breast, that the blood gushed out through my mouth, nose, and ears. At Grampound I was pressed for a soldier; kept under a strong guard for several days, without meat or drink but what I was obliged to procure at a large expense; and threatened to have my feet tied under the horse's belly, while I was carried eight miles before the commissioners: and though I was honourably acquitted by them, yet it lost me a pretty large sum of money, as well as much trouble.'

In John Haime, 1710–1784, who also wrote his Autobiography, we have quite a different kind of character, whose adventures in life even extended to the wars on the Continent. As a youth, in business he seems to have lacked perseverance, to have been changeable; and his religious experience in later years was somewhat akin to that of John Bunyan; at all events, his supposed adventures with the devil very much resembled some of the passages in *Grace Abounding*. Haime even exceeded Bunyan in extravagance, and at one time was no doubt in the borderland of credulity and superstition, *e.g.*:—

'I was employed by a tanner, to go with his carriage and fetch bark. As I was returning by myself, I was violently tempted to blaspheme, yea, and to hate God: at length, having a stick in my

hand, I threw it towards heaven against God, with the utmost enmity. Immediately I saw in the clear element a creature like a swan, but much larger, part black, part brown. It flew at me, and went just over my head. Then it went about forty yards, lighted on the ground, and stood staring upon me. This was in a clear day, about twelve o'clock. I strove to pray but I could not. At length God opened my mouth.'

Through such undesirable byways, in which, as in a maze, for a time he lost his way, Haime progressed into the full liberty of the Gospel. He served under the Duke of Cumberland in the great war on the Continent which broke out after the fall of the peace-loving Sir Robert Walpole. As an evangelist in the British army, Haime had quite a large following, and though many would have hindered him, the royal Duke favoured his endeavours. In after years Wesley himself greatly valued him.

Joseph Cownley, 1723–1792, was a man of whom Wesley said, 'he is one of the best preachers in England.' We are told that 'his learning was confined, though his knowledge was extensive. He had travelled history's enormous round; and there are few books on divinity in the English language but what he had read.' As a preacher he was successful in getting converts; 'alternately he was a son of thunder and of consolation.' His biography is given in a somewhat stilted style, not being, like so many of the others, 'written by himself.'

Thomas Olivers, 1725–1799, ranks as one of the poets of Methodism, the Welsh fire in his nature naturally finding expression in English verse. Some of his hymns survive in our ordinary hymn-books. In early days he was subject 'to a great variety of childish follies'; and he must have been almost a phenomenal example of a vehement profane swearer. No doubt Bunyan exaggerated his own excesses in this respect; but Olivers did not do so: 'It is horrid to think how often I have cursed the wind and the weather, the souls of horses and cows, yea, the very heart's blood of stones, trees, gates, and doors!' He was idle, somewhat dissipated, so that in one instance he went to bed for only one night out of sixteen. Associated with those early days was this singular anecdote:—

'For four or five years I was greatly entangled with a farmer's daughter, whose sister was married to Sir J. P——. When she died, Sir J. was almost distracted. Presently, after her funeral, he published an Elegy on her of a thousand verses! For her sake he said—

> "O that the fleecy care had been my lot,
> Some lonely cottage on some verdant spot!"

For some time he daily visited her in her vault, and at last took her up, and kept her in his bed-chamber for several years!'

After conversion, Olivers joined the Methodist Society at Bradford in Wiltshire, and there met with an adventure which he believed to be a vision or revelation:—

'As I returned home, just as I came to the bottom of the hill, at the entrance to the town, a ray of light, resembling the shining of a star, descended through a small opening in the heavens, and instantaneously shone upon me. In that instant my burden fell off, and I was so elevated, that I felt as if I could literally fly away to heaven.'

Like some others who as preachers assisted Wesley, Olivers spent a great proportion of his life on horseback; for he reckoned that one cob, for which he paid five pounds, in course of twenty-five years carried him a hundred thousand miles. For some years Olivers served as a kind of sub-editor at the Book-Room, but he was so ill-qualified for this office, that eventually Wesley was 'obliged, however unwillingly, to drop Mr. O——.' The errata became 'unsufferable,' as did the liberty he took to insert pieces in the Magazine unknown to his chief. Yet his hymns still live; and he survived to see his piece on the Last Judgment —the music being of his own composing—run through twenty editions. As a young man he had small-pox; and his description of the disease—his case being of the most malignant type—is too dreadful for quotation.

A native of Carlisle, Thomas Hanby, 1733–1797, refers to himself as 'rough in my manners, untamed my mind.' Before he got into the light he went through a strange and distressing experience; at one time trying to excel as a legalist, and at another time spending 'much time praying in the fields, woods, and barns.' On one occasion

'while praying in a dark place' he was 'greatly terrified for fear I should see the devil.' In the brief account he gives of himself, we see how the evangelical teaching of Methodism would come into direct conflict with the Arian and Socinian wave which was then blighting the religious life of the country. Hanby had a cousin who drew him away from Methodism, and who attended the ministry of a man after his own mind.

'The minister told my cousin, provided he would form a religious society upon rational principles, he would sometimes come himself. He accordingly did, and in a little time we had a larger society than the Methodists, of formal professors who could play at cards, take their pleasures, and conform to the world in almost everything.'

He eventually became one of those devoted men who was content to live a life of distinguished hardship for the Gospel's sake when he might have enjoyed the luxuries of life by following his own calling. He also suffered greatly from mobs, and one of his many, almost tragic, adventures in 1754 was in the inn at Leek, in the Midlands, where he had taken up his quarters:—

'I had ordered dinner; but before it was ready, the mob collected together in a large body, and beset the inn. The landlord came to me in great confusion, and entreated me to leave the place immediately, or his house would be pulled down, and I should be murdered. I was obliged to obey. I mounted my horse in the yard, and rode through the mob, amidst stones, dirt, etc., whilst they were

gathering in vast numbers from every part of the town, crying, "Kill him! Kill him!" There was from this time no access to Leek, till the chief men of this mob died miserably; and of the rest, some went for soldiers, and all of them were dispersed, except one man, who was alive some months ago, in miserable circumstances.'

Described as a man of 'strong understanding,' Alexander Mather, 1733–1800, was a native of Brechin, N.B. As a child of twelve, in 1745, he strayed from home into the ranks of the rebels who had risen on behalf of the luckless adventurer Charles Edward Stuart, who hoped to place on the British throne his still more worthless father, 'James III.' As the child's act was 'treason,' however, he had to go into hiding, to avoid the pains and penalties of the Government of George II.

In after days he migrated to London, and worked at his trade of a baker, and endured hardness to a degree not often equalled. 'My master was often afraid I should kill myself,' he says; 'and perhaps his fears were not groundless.' After a hard day's work he would 'run to preach at one or another chapel.' Later the work of the night commenced. Then he 'wrought hard all night and preached at five the next morning. I ran back to draw the bread at a quarter or half an hour past six; wrought hard in the bakehouse till eight; then hurried about with the bread till the afternoon, and perhaps at night set off again.'

Eventually he devoted all of his time to preaching, and would have done so earlier had not the

stewards been 'unwilling to allow' four shillings a week to the wife while her husband was on the road!

As a native of Northumberland, William Hunter, 1728–1797, knew what it was to endure hardship in youth. His father was a severe man, and among those with whom he associated evangelical religion was mere 'Methodism.' Thoughts of death were a terror, and that may probably have inspired the dream 'that Satan came to me and would have me.' When he was affected on hearing one of the preachers, some of his associates, who had more to do with the alehouse than with religion, 'cursed and swore bitterly at me.' He was too much of a coward at first to be able to resist the enemy; and after again attending a Methodist service, he 'roared for disquietness of heart.' The change now was so genuine, that he was prompted to preach, and he had much success in Barnard-Castle Circuit, and the work so prospered that 'hardly anything of the kind in England hath exceeded it, both with regard to its swiftness and depth: the power of God bore all down before it, and it seemed as if God was about to convert the whole world.'

The youthful experience of Robert Roberts, 1731–1799, affords a glimpse of the religious condition of England in the reign of George II., when he remarks, 'Nor do I remember that I ever heard one Gospel sermon till I was above twenty years of age.' He showed courage, however, such as can now hardly be properly appreciated, *e.g.*:—

'At that time the Methodists were looked upon as the worst of men, and the most horrible things were laid to their charge that could be invented. They were represented as hypocrites, blasphemers, disturbers of the peace of families and of the nation; and to associate with them was said to be the way to destroy body, soul, and substance. Others, indeed, might curse and swear, get drunk, profane the Sabbath, and starve their families, and yet be in no danger of persecution or ill-treatment of any kind; but, on the contrary, were deemed innocent creatures in comparison of the Methodists.'

When his heart was changed, even his nearest kin turned against him; they said 'it would be no more sin to kill me than to kill a mad dog.' Yet this man, who possessed a small estate, which sufficed for the support of his large family, was one of the bravest of volunteers: 'food and raiment were all I could expect or ever desired as a temporal reward.'

According to Wesley himself, Thomas Payne, a native of Gloucestershire, 1741–1783, was 'a plain, honest, zealous man; fearing neither men nor devils.' It was his privilege to have pious parents; but the good impressions of youth wore away, and enlisting in the service of the East India Company, he was sent to the island of St. Helena. He was impressed by many things: he saw a shark bite a man in two pieces; 'others, getting drunk, rolled down precipices,' while 'others fell into the sea,' so that large numbers on the island 'did not live out half their days.' His growing seriousness was

stimulated by what he may be excused for calling an extraordinary occurrence :—

'One night, as I was standing sentinel at Mr. M——'s door, I heard a dreadful rattling, as if the house was all shaken to pieces, and tumbling down about my ears. Looking towards it, I saw an appearance, about the size of a six-weeks' calf, lying at the door. It rose, came towards me, looked me in the face, passed by, returned again, and went to the door. The house shook as before, and it disappeared. A few days after, our head innkeeper, Mr. M——, told the officer of the guard, that the same night Mrs. M—— died, he, with eight persons more sitting up, observed the house shake exceedingly; that they were greatly surprised, and carefully searched every room, but to no purpose; that not long after there was a second shaking, as violent as the former; that a while after the house shook a third time; and just then Mrs. M—— died.'

His religious convictions returned, but for long he was in the Slough of Despond, continually having 'some dreadful dream presaging the wrath to come.' Some laughed at him, and one fellow-soldier, to provoke him, used an expression of an unusually blasphemous kind, and judgment overtook him :—

'Immediately a horror fell upon him, and from that hour he had no rest, day or night, till he made an open confession to a magistrate that seven years before he had murdered a soldier, whose apparition followed him wherever he was.'

The man was condemned to death, but Payne seems to have been instrumental in his conversion. Payne's distress rather increased than otherwise. He dreamed that he was on 'a frightful precipice,' one being about to hurl him down, 'when I was turned into a white dove, and flew up again.' The man in the dream, however, corresponded to one who afterwards bore false witness against him, so that he was sent back to England, where he enlisted again. He did good work in the army, but, his discharge being paid for, he afterwards served as a local preacher in Ireland and elsewhere. He was hardly more than a young man when he died.

Like the above soldier adventurer, Richard Rodda, 1743–1815, supplied Wesley with some account of himself. Like some of his comrades, he could tell of wonderful experiences in early life at home. Thus, as an infant of four years, 'as I was lying on the ground, and looking up to heaven, I thought I saw the form of a large tree. While I gazed on it, something inwardly said, "This is the tree of life."' Soon after, his mother falling into 'a deep consumption' was so reduced in strength that she 'could not walk across the room.' The surgeons of the time were for most part a source of danger rather than of benefit; but 'she was perfectly restored by making a hole in the ground, and breathing into it for a quarter of an hour every morning.'

In early life he was providentially saved from drowning 'forty fathoms under ground,' as by a miracle. Afterwards, being the victim of a

dangerous fever, he was supposed to be dead, and he even thought himself that his 'soul had actually left the body, and was mounting upwards like a bird in the air.' He adds: 'I saw the eternal Sun of Righteousness shining more glorious than the sun in his meridian lustre. Indeed, I had such views of God and glory as I never had before or since.' He was impressed for the navy, but got off, many of his neighbours who were shipped off being less fortunate. Rodda did good itinerant work for nearly a third of a century, and in the latter part of his life laboured in London.

Thomas Walsh, a native of Limerick, 1730–1758, passed away as quite a young man; but besides being a convert from Romanism, he was remarkable for that persevering application which enabled him to read both the Old and the New Testaments in their original tongues, while Irish and English were to him as native languages. He ruined his health by too close application.

'If his bones had been brass, and his flesh iron, they must have yielded to the violence which his life and labours offered to his constitution. He enjoyed good health till about the nineteenth year of his age, which was the year of his conversion to God. But from the twentieth to the twenty-eighth, which was the last year of his sojourning among men, his life may be said to be no other than a lingering death; as he never was a whole day free from pain or weakness.'

The life of John Pawson, 1737–1806, like so

many of the others, was written by himself, and there is a concluding note by Dr. Adam Clarke. The account is valuable, because we see something of the everyday eighteenth-century life 'in a very obscure village near Leeds,' while his parents were strict church-people. 'My father maintained his authority in his own house, and his word gave law to his children,' he says; adding, 'we had not the Gospel preached in Thorner, and . . . I am of opinion that there was not a single person in the place who had any saving knowledge of God.'

The first time that young Pawson sat in a Dissenting place of worship was at a Quaker meeting, when he heard 'a woman speak for more than an hour.' He was thoroughly astonished to find that those outside of the Established Church were of such quiet behaviour, and of such good morals. When, however, he showed signs of being enlightened by the Methodists, his father, who was a regular church-goer, could not have been more distressed had his son turned libertine. The influence of John influenced others, so that the peace of the family was broken, and the youthful offender was threatened with severe pains and penalties. In due time all this trouble passed away through the conversion of the father himself. The following passage relates to the Gordon riots in London in 1780:—

'The time was certainly awful, and it was truly wonderful that no more mischief was done. They might have been suppressed in the beginning with the greatest ease, but were strangely suffered to

proceed in their bad work, with little or no interruption. The riots began on the Saturday night were renewed on Sunday night, and continued till Thursday, when the Government interposed, and very soon restored peace to the City. I never could learn that the Protestant Association had any hand in this business; but it was believed by many that the Papists themselves were active therein, . . . on account of Mr. Wesley having published several letters against Popery at that time. A more awful and distressing sight I never saw, as we were surrounded with fire on every side; Clerkenwell Prison, Newgate, the Fleet, the King's Bench Prison, together with many other buildings, being all in flames at the same time.'

Born in 1720, and passing away in 1799, Sampson Staniforth was a preacher for about half a century, and he 'steadily walked with God for nearly sixty years.' One of a family of thirteen, he grew up without being properly educated, while in his home he 'heard nothing about either religion or morality.' In his youth he was a cause of great trouble to his family by getting into bad company, by gaming, drinking, and showing a disposition to enlist in the army. In the Duke of Cumberland's army he passed through much hard service and privation on the Continent; but, as is well known, there were a number of ardent Methodist Christians in the ranks, and, especially through coming in contact with Mark Bond, Staniforth became a convert. They both were in the battle of Fontenoy. Staniforth says: 'All the day I was in

great spirits, and as composed in my mind as if I had been hearing a sermon.' Bond's testimony was similar:—

'He told me it had been a happy day to him. He had received two musket-balls; but one struck him on the right thigh, and hit on two sevenpenny-pieces that were in his pocket (they are of a mixed metal about the size of half a crown); it appeared to him as if he had received a blow with a stick. The other struck him on his left-side pocket, upon a clasped knife, and bent the blade and loosened it in the handle. So that we may well say, "Go and return secure from death, till God command thee home."'

He came back to England at the time of the rising under the Young Pretender in 1745; but it does not seem that he was ever actually engaged with the rebels, and before he became one of Wesley's preachers he returned to the Continent, where he went through more dangerous adventures, which he relates in his own graphic style. Like some of the other preachers, the events of his life are told in a letter which he addressed to Wesley himself.

'Sampson in youth—like the unbroken steed—
With British soldiers, rank'd in flaming red,
To Flanders march'd to meet the Gallic foe:—
'Twas there the youth first learned himself to know.'

Thomas Lee, 1727–1786, was regarded by Wesley as a 'faithful brother, and a good old soldier of Jesus Christ.' His narrative is chiefly remarkable first for his experience as a child, when he was so

tormented by fears of hell that he wished for annihilation; and secondly for that fury of mob persecution which he braved for a long period as one of Grimshaw's preachers in Yorkshire. Some of the rioters were brought up at the Assizes at Newark, and had a lesson which cooled their ardour, although parsons, squires, and even jurymen in some instances, favoured them. Lee died in harness. 'He preached twice the Sunday before he died; although he went to the preaching-house on crutches, and sat all the time he preached.'

The life of John Prickard, 1744–1784, was compartively short; but in his native Wales, and also in Ireland, he went through some good hard service. He was successful in Ireland in checking the robbery of wrecked vessels which was then prevalent in certain coast districts. 'A great deliverance,' which, he once experienced in Radnorshire, shows what kind of adventures a travelling preacher might meet with in mountainous solitudes:—

'As I passed over the mountains beyond Pains Castle, it snowed very hard. When the snow ceased a thick mist came on, and soon after a very dark night. In these circumstances I expected nothing but to perish before the morning; as the snow had filled up all the roads, and as I was afraid the fog would bewilder me. Going on, I soon lost my road, and found myself among a number of turf-pits. In this situation I looked up to God for direction. Presently I recollected that

the wind was west when I came up the hill; and knowing that my course was near north, and that there was a valley lying east and west, about two miles to the northward, I resolved to shape my course by keeping the wind upon my left cheek. Being rather afraid lest the wind should change, I looked up and left that to God. As I could not see twice the length of my horse, I was in great danger of falling into the turf-pits. Nevertheless, I went on, trusting in God, and was kept happy in my soul. Having travelled a long time in the dark, I at last saw a star through the fog, and judged that the valley was near; and in a short time I found it to be the case, to my very great comfort, and, through the mercy of God, I entered it, and so got safe to B. Griffith's about half-past seven o'clock.'

The life of Jonathan Maskew extended from the reign of Queen Anne far into that of George III. He did good service in Yorkshire, and in Grimshaw's district of Haworth. He was not an educated man; but his life-story would have been far more interesting if he had written it himself, as was done by so many of his comrades.

> 'Fate seemed to wind him up for seventy years,
> Yet freely ran he on ten winters more;
> Till, like a clock worn out with eating time,
> The wheels of weary life at last stood still.'

Matthias Joyce, 1754–1814, 'was early in life converted from the errors of Popery'; and after meeting with more than his average share of accidents and wild adventures, such as running away

from his master in Dublin, who was a printer, he developed into 'a wise, acceptable, and successful preacher.'

James Rogers, 1749–1807, was also a native of Yorkshire, and was acquainted with the Scriptures from early childhood. A tolling bell, or any reminder of death, would make him 'very thoughtful.' Thunder and lightning greatly affected him, and even inspired alarm, since 'it was God speaking from the clouds'; and he 'would run to the door to see Him come' to judge the world! No wonder that he actually dreamed of seeing the Day of Judgment itself, when 'all the inhabitants of the place,' who had been 'known to curse and swear and get drunk,' were 'struck with inexpressible consternation and horror.'

As a Methodist preacher, Rogers had his full share of rough adventure; but he seems to have willingly endured hardness. Some three or four years after Dr. Johnson and Boswell made their tour to the west coast of Scotland, James Rogers resolved to visit the Isle of Bute, but, through a dreadful storm coming on, he got thoroughly wet, and the hardship he endured affected his health for some time afterwards. His experience after landing is best told in his own words, and well shows what a subordinate preacher of the Revival might have to endure in the days of a century and a quarter ago:—

'Having no clothes to shift me, I went straight to the inn where I had slept before; intending to go immediately to bed, as my only resource to pre-

vent a fit of sickness; but, to my great disappointment, a gentleman's family, who had been detained by the same storm, had possession of my lodgings. In about two hours an old man, hearing of my situation, came and gave me a kind invitation to his little cottage. I gladly accepted his friendly offer; and hastening home with him, put off my wet clothes; but my bed being raised only about twelve inches from a damp earthen floor, and there being no fire, it was not quite so comfortable as my condition then required, especially as the coverings were not warm, being nearly worn out. The consequence was, in a few hours I found my throat exceedingly inflamed, and a burning feverish heat through my whole frame; so that I had little hope of ever seeing the mainland again. It was also impracticable to send for any of my friends, because of the weather: yet, blessed be God, I was not friendless: for that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother did not leave me, neither forsake me. He who filleth the vast immensity of space with His presence, can never be distant from those who hope in His mercy; nor can He fail to deliver them in the time of need. . . . In a few days I was able to go out again. But I was then hard put to it for food; and having nothing that I could relish, I employed a poor woman to gather me a kind of shell-fish, about half the size of cockles, which was my chief support till I was able to return to the mainland. After this, I remained some months in Glasgow and Edinburgh; but did not recover my health for a long time.'

Another Yorkshireman was Thomas Taylor, 1738–1816, whose natural temper as a child was 'active, wild, and very mischievous,' so that he was addicted to 'little wild pranks.' He lost his parents early and fell into evil ways. After conversion he did good service in preaching throughout the British Isles, while he bore his share of suffering from hard living and persecution. A disaster happened at Colne in 1776, which shows that even then jerry builders were not unknown:—

'We had with much difficulty raised a fine large chapel; and, being completed, Mr. Wesley came to open it. Being much crowded, both above and below, and the timber of the galleries not being sufficiently strong, just when Mr. Wesley and I got into the pulpit, before he began, all of a sudden one of the galleries sunk down, and abundance of people had legs, arms, or thighs broken. The confusion, as may easily be imagined, was very great; and the cries of such as were maimed, and such as were frightened, were truly piercing. Many false reports were spread concerning this awful adventure. Some said the whole chapel was in danger, and therefore durst not come into it. By one means or other, the work got a dreadful stun, which I fear it will not recover very soon.'

Few of Wesley's preachers could show such scholarship. He could read the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New in Greek, while he also knew Latin. Speaking of the York Circuit early in the reign of George III., he draws a sombre picture:—

'There is but little trade in any part of the

Circuit; and where there is little trade, there is seldom much increase in religion. The people are chiefly farmers, and in general in a state of great bondage to their wealthy landlords, to whom they are a kind of vassals, and in general dread them more abundantly than they do their Maker: and though some of them had got money upon their farms, with a deal of care and hard labour, yet there are others who are very hard set to live; and certainly, they are some of the greatest slaves in England, for they labour hard, and live very poorly.'

Taylor laboured in the cause for between fifty and sixty years.

John Furz, born in 1717, lived on until almost the end of the century; but the latter part of his life was passed in second childhood. Then there was Thomas Rankin, who died in 1810, after fifty years of earnest Christian profession. In the earlier part of his course he led an adventurous life on the sea. When in the present United States, in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, in 1775, he met with John Brainerd, whose brother David,—'the Apostle to the Indians,'—some eighteen years previously, had died in the thirtieth year of his age, at the house of his friend and biographer Jonathan Edwards.

Still another Yorkshireman, George Storey, 1738–1818, also left an autobiography. He was a precocious child, who in his fifth year could repeat the Catechism 'before the minister in the church'; and about a year later he 'had read the Bible

through several times.' He passed through a remarkable experience. After his conversion in 1762, he preached about England, Scotland, and Ireland for nearly thirty years. Soon after Wesley's death he became Editor of the Magazine, etc., and later, Superintendent of the printing office.

Although he was a native of Huddersfield, William Black, 1760–1834, went with his father at an early age to Nova Scotia, and such was the value of his work, and the confidence he inspired, that he became appointed Superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in British America. He could read the Scriptures in their original languages; and 'he was justly regarded as the father of Methodism in that portion of the British Empire.' He once met with a man who 'appeared evidently to be under the influence of an evil spirit'; and when restored, the person himself held this opinion. Black thus describes the case:—

'I know not how to describe his various gestures and hideous noises. Sometimes he barked like a dog; then again he would fly round the room, jumping, stamping, and making the most dreadful noises, imitating the Indian powwows, when they invoke the infernal powers. He then roared and screamed in my ears, and shouted in order to drown my voice; mingling with his shouts terms of the most bitter disdain, and execrable blasphemy against Jesus Christ. I found his design was, if possible, to stop me from praying; thinking he should then have power to seize me; but I was peculiarly helped to wrestle with the Lord, that He

would either bind or cast out the evil one. I continued praying until he became quiet as a lamb, kneeled down by me, and began to pray. He told me afterwards, that he was so strongly possessed by the devil that he wished to tear out my eyes or kill me; but that after his hands came to the bottom of my back, he could touch me no more. Hence, we may learn the devil's malice, the prevalence of prayer, and the worth and necessity of our Bibles.'

John Valton, 1740–1794, was of French descent; and as a child he was taken to Boulogne to become perfected in the French language, where he 'remained six months bowing to images of wood and stone and wax, and imbibing the baneful potions of idolatry and superstition.' His life was not a very long one, but his biography is fully given, being filled up with extracts from a voluminous diary.

A native of Lincolnshire, George Shadford, 1739–1816, was a child of parents who were well disposed towards religion. As a youth, he 'was very prone to break the Sabbath,' while he wished that the parson of the parish was dead 'because he hindered our sports on the Lord's Day.' It seemed that he was hardly made of the stuff of which preachers are generally made:—

'I was fond of wrestling, running, leaping, foot-ball, dancing, and such-like sports; and I gloried in them, because I could excel most in the town and parish. At the age of twenty I was so active, that I seemed a compound of life and fire; and I

had such a flow of animal spirits, that I was never in my element but when employed in such kind of sports.'

For a time his lot was cast in America, and while there he also met with John Brainerd, and 'conversed about two hours very profitably about his brother David, and the Indians he had the care of.' He also narrates this adventure :—

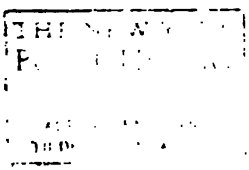
'One day a friend took me to see a hermit in the woods. After some difficulty we found his hermitage, which was a little place like a hog-sty, built of several pieces of wood, covered with bark of trees; and his bed consisted of dry leaves. There was a narrow, beaten path, about twenty or thirty yards in length, by the side of it, where he frequently walked to meditate. If one offered him food, he would take it; but if money was offered him, he would be very angry. If anything was spoken to him which he did not like he broke out into a violent passion. He had lived in this cell seven cold winters; and after all his prayers, counting his beads, and separating from the rest of mankind, still corrupt nature was all alive within him.'

Another of his adventures affords a glimpse of the country as it was on the eve of the War of Independence, which was a result of the arrogance and misgovernment of George III. and his Ministers.

'The spirit of the people began now to be agitated with regard to politics. They threatened me with imprisonment when I prayed for the King;

took me up and examined me, and pressed me to take the test-oath to renounce him for ever. I thought then I had done my work there, and set out, after I had been a year and a half amongst them, for Maryland. But it being in the depth of winter, I was one night lost in the woods, when it was very cold, and the snow a foot deep on the ground. I could find no house, nor see any traveller; and I knew I must perish if I continued there all night. I alighted from my horse, kneeled down upon the snow, and prayed earnestly to God to direct me. When I arose I believed I should have something to direct me. I stood listening a short space, and at last heard a dog barking at some distance; so I followed the sound, and after some time found a house and plantation.'

These brief notices of the Wesleyan Methodist preachers who assisted in the Revival of the eighteenth century will tend to show that without their organised efforts Wesley could not have done what he did. There are several names which have not been mentioned; but such readers as desire fuller acquaintance with these comparatively humble pioneers in a great movement, cannot do better than read for themselves the six volumes in which their lives are contained. It was meet that their names should be kept in remembrance; and their stories of life and adventure, which in so many instances were written by themselves, are both entertaining and instructive reading.



THE NEW CANADIAN PAINTING OF SUSANNAH WESLEY (MOTHER OF THE WESLEYS), BY J. W. L. FORSTER.

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CHAPTER III

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

THE great leaders of the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century underwent a gradual preparation for their work; and had not this been thus well ordered by Divine Providence, the men who led the van in what we call the Revival would not have been the apostles that they were. In some cases the conversions of these men may have seemed to come suddenly; but what is called conversion in their case may at times have been but the last process of the grand transformation. Was it not so in the cases of John Wesley and C. H. Spurgeon? The former once refused to say that he was not in a state of grace in days when he failed to see Gospel truth in its fulness; and very similar was the case of Spurgeon before he entered the Colchester Primitive Methodist Chapel, where he is popularly represented as having been converted. Having passed through the experience that they did, the preachers to the common people were enabled to make due allowance for the unsympathetic attitude of others whom they had left far behind. Persons who were

wholly captivated by the world, or those who merely gave an intellectual assent to the doctrines of Christianity, were not able to understand the true nature and meaning of the Revival.

In many instances these objectors were such as Scripture classed with 'unreasonable men.' When, at the outset of the great movement, Wesley found that he was so commonly misunderstood and misrepresented, he thought that if he had but a few friends to set matters straight all would be well; but he found that when he and his people came to be called Methodists as a term of reproach, all argument was supposed to be at an end when an objector remarked, 'I suppose you are a Methodist too.' The country had so far receded from the Puritan ideals of the preceding century, that to be religious was the most ungenteel thing of all in the world of fashion.

'Hence, on the one hand,' says Wesley, 'many who knew what my conversation was, were afraid to declare the truth, lest the same reproach should fall upon them: and those few who broke through this fear were soon disabled from declaring it with effect by being immediately ranked with him they defended. What impartial man, then, can refuse to say, "It is permitted for thee to answer for thyself."' This he did in his Diary. The object was to openly declare to the world what had been done, and the way in which it had been effected. The things which had come to pass were in a sense unique; at all events, they were such as neither they nor their fathers before them had

known. There had been no respect of persons, Jews and Arians, Atheists and 'Pharisees' had been arrested in their course, and had been transformed. Then the work bore evidence that human wisdom had had nothing to do with it; the manner in which the work had been done was no less strange than the work itself. All needed to be told, and Wesley resolved to tell it in plain English, so that all might impartially judge of the matter for themselves.

But while others were prejudiced, and were also victims of false reports, those who had been strictly educated in the teaching and discipline of the Established Church had also to overcome some of their own personal prejudices. It was on the last day of March 1739 that Wesley met Whitefield at Bristol, and on the Sunday preceding, the latter had introduced the then strange innovation of preaching in the open air. 'I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he (Whitefield) set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.' He now saw, however, that the Sermon on the Mount was 'one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching.' On Monday, April 2, Wesley himself preached for the first time in the open-air 'from a little eminence' outside of Bristol, and to a congregation of three thousand persons.

It seems to be a remarkable fact, that Wesley seemed to gain new strength in proportion as the demands on his time and energy became more pressing. Thus, on the last Sunday of April 1739 he commenced his day's work by preaching 'to about four thousand people,' after which he conducted a service at Clifton for a minister who was ill; 'and thence returned to a little plain near Hannam Mount, where about three thousand were present.' After dinner there was another service at Clifton, as well as a burial. From Clifton he went to Rose Green, where he had about seven thousand hearers, this being followed by a visit to a Society, and a love-feast. 'O how God has renewed my strength, who used ten years ago to be so faint and weary with preaching *twice* in one day.'

Still, there were plenty of people to ask, 'How can these things be?' They could not understand sudden transformations, and even well-wishers might prescribe caution, urging that results should not be traced to Divine agency which might possibly come of extravagance and excitement. In answering one such objector, Wesley intended to reply to many, and extraordinary as his words may have seemed, they could not be gainsaid:—

'I will show you him that was a lion till then, and is now a lamb; him that was a drunkard, and is now exemplarily sober; the whoremonger that was, who now abhors the very garment spotted by the flesh. These are my living arguments for what I assert, viz., That God does now, as aforetime, give remission of sins, and the gift of the

Holy Ghost, even to us, and to our children; yea, and that always suddenly, so far as I have known, and often in dreams, or in the visions of God.'

These things greatly offended many who could not only not understand them, but were moved to show resentment. The crowds were often so great, however, as to show that the common people were thoroughly aroused. In June 1739 we find Wesley and Whitefield together at Blackheath, where there were over twelve thousand persons assembled. Whitefield's commanding popularity had sufficed to attract that throng; but 'he a little surprised me by desiring me to preach in his stead,' says Wesley; and though 'nature recoiled,' the task was undertaken, the preacher selecting a favourite subject—'Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' As would happen in those days, numbers of the upper classes were present in their coaches, attracted by curiosity to hear the famous orator, 'some of whom seemed to attend, while others drove away their coaches from so uncouth a preacher.'

What also strikes us is, that the work was not characterised by any hard-and-fast conventional methods. At times the preachers would follow their own bent, the patience and attention of the people giving them licence such as would hardly be yielded in these days. Thus, we find that a service at Cardiff was protracted in a way that would not now be readily tolerated. As the preacher says: 'My heart so enlarged I knew not

how to give over, so that we continued three hours.' This would occur from time to time apparently without discommoding the hearers. We find a similar thing happening at Birstal some years later, *e.g.*: 'I was constrained to continue my discourse there near an hour longer than usual; God pouring out such a blessing, that I knew not how to leave off.'

In that age, when the amenities of controversy were not always understood or practised, it was quite natural that differences of opinion, in regard to theological teaching, should at times even threaten to separate those who had lived on terms of close friendship. At the outset of the Revival, after Whitefield's return from Georgia, Wesley became conscious of 'unkind behaviour' on his part—a contrast to the closer friendship which bound them together in later days. When Whitefield had an opportunity to 'speak for himself,' he used 'plainness of speech,' which seemed intended to show that Arminians and Calvinists had more points of disagreement than of agreement. Whitefield even said that 'two different Gospels' were being preached, and he meant not only to have no fellowship with those who differed from him, but openly to oppose them. 'Mr. Hall, who went with me,' adds Wesley, 'put him in mind of the promise he had made but a few days before, that whatever his private opinion was, he would never publicly preach against us. He said, that promise was only an effect of human weakness and he was now of another mind.' The two

systems of theology seemed to be irreconcilable; and it was too readily taken for granted that the members of the two schools were necessarily so far in opposition each to the other, that it was impossible for peace to be maintained. About the same time we find Wesley doing what he had not done before, he preached a sermon 'directly on Predestination' at Kingswood School. About the same time that he did this, we are hardly surprised to find that Wesley also 'sharply reproved many for their unfaithfulness to the grace of God.' How changed were many of the choicest spirits of the time, a generation later, when the Revival itself had diffused more widely the principles of love and unity which pervade the New Testament. How closely knit together in the Lord's work were these two great souls before death took the one, while the other held on through another two decades. By Whitefield's own followers, in 1770, Wesley was accounted the most suitable person to preach his late friend's funeral sermon, not only at the chief centre in Tottenham Court Road, but also at Greenwich Tabernacle. It was then that the preacher was able to say: 'I trust God has given a blow to that bigotry which has prevailed for many years.'

The question might be asked, To what extent did the Moravian Brethren—the *Unitas Fratrum* —influence the Revival in its early stages? After 'a long conversation with Peter Bohler' in the spring of 1741, we find Wesley remarking, 'I marvel how I refrain from joining these men. I

scarce ever see any of them but my heart burns within me. I long to be with them; and yet I am kept from them.' A few days later, in writing to his brother, the reason became plain; the Moravian 'general scheme is mystical, not scriptural; refined in every point above what is written; immeasurably beyond the plain Gospel.' Besides, they showed 'darkness and closeness in their behaviour,' as well as 'guile in almost all their words.' Conformity to the world and lack of self-denial were also conspicuous. About twelve years later, or in 1753, Wesley is found receiving into his Society certain persons whom the Moravians had excommunicated. From what these people said, 'It appeared clear to a demonstration: 1. That their Elders usurped a more absolute authority over the conscience than the Bishop of Rome himself does: 2. That to gain and secure this, they use a continued train of guile, fraud, and falsehood of every kind: 3. That they scrape their votaries to the bone as to their worldly substance, leaving little to any, to some nothing, or less than nothing: 4. That still, they are so infatuated as to believe that theirs is the only true Church upon earth.'

At the outset, in regard to open-air preaching, London showed similar temper to that of certain provincial towns in which dangerous riots occurred. In the afternoon of the first Sunday of May 1741, Wesley addressed 'a vast multitude of people' in the open suburban area then known as Mary-le-bone Fields. It is remarked, that 'the devil's

children fought valiantly for their master, that his kingdom should not be destroyed. And many stones fell on my right hand and on my left. But when I began to examine them closely, what reward they were to have for their labour, they vanished away like smoke.' As regarded the provinces, probably Wales showed the best spirit, Pontypool, among towns, being especially noticeable. Of course, there were enemies there, but they could make no headway. 'About noon we came to Pontypool,' says Wesley (October 3, 1741). 'A clergyman met me in the first street; a few more found me out soon after, whose love I did not find to be cooled at all by the bitter adversaries who had been among them.'

It may generally be taken for granted that a work is prosperous if it is sought to hinder it by false reports. Probably no one was ever more subjected to this kind of opposition than Wesley; but no one was ever less troubled about false reports, or such as affected his reputation. At one time those chiefly concerned might be accused of making 'a good thing out of the Revival': at another time, Wesley might be pointed at as a Jesuit, and consequently as a dangerous agent of the Pretender. Whatever he might be, however, no man was less likely to hang himself before his life-work was complete. In and about Bristol in 1741, even this tragic kind of report 'had been diligently spread abroad,' until it was 'cordially believed in by many.' During a service at Kingswood one openly preferred the charge; but when a way

was opened for him to come forward and explain himself, 'he ran away with all possible speed, not so much as once looking behind him.'

From the first there were those who after joining the Society left for eccentric or trivial reasons.

Some stayed away on account of distance, or want of time; others were afraid of falling into a fit, or people were rude to them in the streets. Among those who were actually excluded, one was for wife beating and one for selling spirituous liquors.

In some cases the law-breakers themselves were victims of the grosser kinds of opposition; and when a rioter had a stone cut his hand, or felt blood streaming down his face through being hit by a sharp missile, he had no cause of complaint. Of course, the more diabolical form of opposition came from those who caricatured religion on the stage; and this spirit of the enemy became manifest almost from the outset of the Revival. Foote, who caricatured Whitefield more particularly, came later, but others preceded that gifted but sorry buffoon. In the fall of 1743 a farce was acted at Newcastle 'for the benefit of Mr. Este,' and this was called 'Trick upon Trick; or, Methodism Displayed.'

The most commonplace form of opposition was that of the mob threatening to maim or even murder the preachers; but the most sensational things even in connection with these were the escapes of the itinerants. In some instances injury was inflicted, but for the most part the boldness, earnestness, and faith of the preachers

were a better protection to them than arms. Take as an example what happened at Falmouth in July 1745, when Wesley visited an invalid gentlewoman in the town. No sooner was the visitor seated than the vast crowd which besieged the house made noise enough to have sufficed 'at the taking of a city by storm.' The outer door was forced, and, finding that nothing more than a wainscot-partition separated him and the mob, Wesley 'immediately took down a large looking-glass,' apparently more anxious for the furniture than for himself. 'But, sir, is it not better for you to hide yourself—to get into the closet?' asked a maid. 'No, it is best for me to stand just where I am,' was the answer. He faced the mob, as he always did, without signs of fear; and ere long the ringleaders were anxious to hear him speak, declaring that no one should hinder him. Probably no man ever more readily made friends of mob-leaders; so that the comical phenomenon might sometimes be seen of a blustering anti-Methodist suddenly changing his tone and tactics—swearing that not a hair of the preacher's head should be touched, for whose life-blood he and his battalions had just before been clamouring.

It was not by means of such open enemies that the work was chiefly hindered, however, but rather by the bickerings and opposition of those who stirred up disputes concerning doctrine and discipline. When at Wednesbury, in the spring of 1751, Wesley seems to have realised the loss which had come from this cause, and to have been correspondingly disappointed when he took stock

of what had been achieved in about twelve years. There had been considerable failure through doubtful disputations on the part of Predestinarians, so that many who had begun well went back into the world, or elsewhere. He says:—

'While we carried our lives in our hands, none of these came near; the waves ran too high for them; but when all was calm, they poured in on every side, and bereaved us of our children. Out of these they formed one Society here, one at Dudley, and another at Birmingham. Many, indeed, though torn from us, would not stay with them, but broke out into the wildest enthusiasm. But still, they were all called Methodists; and so all their drunkenness and blasphemies (not imputed to a believer) were imputed to us.'

Apart from such trials and drawbacks, it would almost seem that the work in general encountered no opposition which did not in the end tend to strengthen the faith of the leaders and their preachers. At times this was brought about in a most striking or providential manner, showing to a demonstration that while man may propose one thing, God disposes another, making that action contribute to the advance of His Kingdom which was intended to hinder its progress. A few miles from Taunton is the village of Charlton, and in the summer of 1754 Wesley preached there to a large and interested congregation which had come from far and near. In the earlier days of the Revival neighbouring farmers had been so opposed to

evangelical teaching that they 'entered into a joint engagement to turn all out of their service, and give no work to any, who went to hear a Methodist preacher.' It happened, however, that a ringleader among these determined men soon afterwards became 'convinced of the truth'; he was then as anxious that the Methodist itinerants should hold their services in his house as he was before determined that they should not set foot in the parish. Being thus encouraged or reassured, 'many of the other confederates came to hear,' greatly to the satisfaction of such servants and labourers who were glad to have their liberty unrestricted. There were no more ardent promoters of the New Reformation than quondam persecutors who had become changed into friends.

To Wesley himself everything connected with the work in England was a matter for amazement, as well as for admiration and devout gratitude. It would seem that while travelling from Nottingham to London at Midsummer 1755, he was occupied on the road in thinking over what had happened; and on reaching the Foundery he gave expression to his thoughts in a discourse on the Psalmist's words—'He hath not dealt so with any nation.' The fire of the Revival had shown itself in Scotland as well as across the sea in New England; but nowhere else had the Lord made bare His arm 'in so astonishing a manner as among us.' The characteristics of the Revival which chiefly impressed Wesley were the large numbers who had been changed, the swiftness of the work, the depth and

the clearness of it. At the date in question, the work had gone on in England for eighteen years, and there were no signs of any abatement of blessing. In some respects the case of England was unique in showing that what had been done was effected without any considerable help from man, and even in the face of opposition of vast numbers who called themselves Christian teachers. In Scotland 'a considerable number' of the ministers aided the movement; in New England 'above an hundred' did so; 'whereas in England there were only two or three inconsiderable clergymen, with a few young, raw, unlettered men: and these opposed by well-nigh all the clergy, as well as laity, in the nation.' All this was convincing testimony that God had not so wrought 'in any other nation.'

Under these conditions we need not wonder that the leaders and their battalions of preachers had their enthusiasm stimulated until the fire even found its way among the common people, who in many cheering instances would show themselves to be superior to discouragement from rough weather or persecution. The preachers were often called upon to suffer from inclement weather, even in months which are commonly associated with sunshine and green foliage. After preaching at Bingley at five in the morning of May 22, 1757, Wesley set off for Haworth, and on the road encountered 'a December storm'; but still found a larger congregation than the church would contain. 'I suppose we had near a thousand communicants, and scarce a trifler among them,'

he says. 'In the afternoon, the church not containing more than a third of the people, I was constrained to be in the churchyard. The rain began as soon as I began to speak; but they regarded it not; for God sent into their hearts

> The former and the latter rain;
> The love of God and love of man.'

Of course the opposition to the work often became very apparent in high places, and even showed itself among the bishops, from whom some kind of impartial moderation might have been expected. What distinguished opportunities were lost to their cause when the chief among the clergy turned their back on the Revival! In the spring of 1760 Wesley came in contact with one whose case was 'very peculiar.' It was held that clergymen of the Established Church should have a University training; but then, 'how many have a University education, and yet no learning at all?' That was no drawback with the worldly-wise bishops of that day; if their candidates were only 'good Churchmen' in the conventional sense, they were readily admitted. Mr. N—— just referred to, however, was a man 'of eminent learning as well as unblamable behaviour'; but he could not 'be ordained because he was not at the University!' This was characterised as a farce to which no Christian bishop might be expected to stoop to; but there were then men in high places in the Church of England who could stoop to still lower things in order to thwart the leaders of the Revival. As 'an episcopal buffoon'

Lavington of Exeter had almost outdone the Restoration ribaldry of South himself.

We need not overlook the fact, that from time to time there was some trouble with the preachers, here and there one not turning out as had been expected. In the case of a large number of men whose united service extended over half a century, this was of course inevitable; and, on the whole, Methodism has a record in connection with the preachers of which we may well be proud as well as thankful. Especially in the earlier days of the Revival, these men suffered much from mob violence, which often had the sympathy of the clergy and their friends the magistrates; but in some instances, in which illegal penalties were imposed, these men found that the law had no mercy for them. The so-called 'Justices' of Hertfordshire and Kent presumed to take the law into their own hands; and, in the latter case, when a fine was imposed upon a local preacher, as it was alleged by authority of the Conventicle Act, 'it cost him some hundred pounds for his pains.'

Thus, amid alternate sunshine and shadow, the work proceeded. When Wesley set out on his northern journey in March 1785, he had just six years of life before him: and what he said concerning the general outlook at that time may well conclude this section of our survey, *e.g.*:—

'I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, has grown up. It has spread through all Great Britain and Ireland; the Isle of Wight, and

the Isle of Man; then to America, from the Leeward Islands, through the whole Continent, into Canada and Newfoundland. And the Societies, in all these parts, walk by one rule, knowing religion is holy tempers; and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise "in spirit and in truth."'

CHAPTER IV

TRAVELLING AND TRAVELLERS: THE ROADS

IN the eighteenth century all travellers were an adventurous race, who were readily excused by the public when found to be proud of their adventures or achievements. Anyone who visited the more distant parts of the Empire, and then wrote an account for the information and entertainment of the people, after the manner of Defoe, was regarded as a person of daring and enterprise, his descriptions being read with no less wonder than admiration. We have also to bear in mind, that in a general way natural scenery was not so admired as is the case to-day. The Highlands of Scotland were looked upon with more terror and dismay than admiration, for example; so that scenes of grandeur would be referred to as 'horrid mountains,' even by Wesley himself, who actually had an eye for the beautiful. Although the great preacher did not write a book of travels, his Diary contains numberless references to places visited during his long itinerancy; and Wesley more thoroughly explored the British Isles than any other man with whom we are acquainted.

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL.

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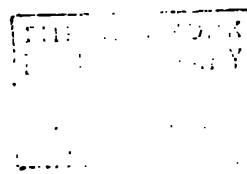

TRAVELLING AND TRAVELLERS

Under almost any circumstances, travelling on the Continent involved not only inconvenience but much actual hardship, as may be gathered from the accounts of various tourists. When in August 1739 Wesley and some companions 'came to Dresden . . . the officer at the gate would not suffer us to come in; so that we were obliged to go on to the next village.' At Leipzig, a day or two later, they were kept waiting an hour, and even then 'the King of Prussia's tall men (who kept the gates) would not suffer Mr. Brown to come in,' although arrangements for his doing so were afterwards made. On account of the slower rate of movement, distances would naturally appear much greater than they do to us. We hear of a letter from Virginia being received in London 'two or three months' after it was written. The ground which an itinerant preacher would go over in course of a year was very great, however. 'I wanted a little rest,' writes Wesley on reaching London from Everton, on August 7, 1759, 'having rode in seven months above four-and-twenty hundred miles.' When riding was so common, or was, rather, the usual mode of travel, a horse would now and then die on the road, but in the summer of 1743 Wesley and a companion each lost his horse in a mysterious way:—

'I set out from Newcastle with John Downes of Horsley. We were four hours riding to Ferry Hill, about twenty measured miles. After resting there an hour, we rode softly on, and at two o'clock came to Darlington. I thought my horse was not

well; he thought the same of his; though they were both young and very well the day before. We ordered the hostler to fetch a farrier, which he did without delay; but before the men could determine what was the matter, both the horses lay down and died.'

One of the greatest dangers of the road was from robbers; who, notwithstanding that the gallows were kept pretty constantly at work, seem to have had things pretty much their own way. Did this entry of October 11, 1742, really represent a special providence?—

'I had designed to leave London; but Mr. Richards being taken ill, I put off my journey. He was much better on Tuesday; so I set out the next morning; and before seven in the evening reached the half-way house, four miles short of Hungerford. I now found that it was well I did not set out on Monday, in order to be at Bristol on Tuesday night as usual. For all the travellers who went that way on Tuesday were robbed. But on Tuesday the road was clear; so that I came safe to Kingswood in the afternoon, and in the evening preached at Bristol.'

The dangers from vicious or careless horses were also considerable; and, on the average, coaches were far more perilous than our modern trains. The rough paving of the streets of London made them awkward and dangerous for driving, and we have this example of a street accident which happened in February 1744:—

'In returning at night from Snowsfields, at the

corner of Joyner-street, the coach, wherein five of us were, was overturned; but without anyone's being hurt; although the shock was so great as not only to dash the fore-windows in pieces, but to break the axle-tree in two.'

The year just named brought with it a very wintry spring, and Wesley was subjected to some accidents and to hardships on the road. While passing through Newbury on March 11, 'my horse fell and threw me into a deep mire,' he says. On going towards Launceston on April 2, the Cornish hills 'were covered with snow as in the depth of winter'; and the travellers arrived at Trewint 'wet and weary enough, having been battered by the rain and hail for some hours.'

In the early months of the year following all travellers suffered great inconvenience, or even hardship, from snowed-up roads. On February 22 'there was so much snow about Boroughbridge, that we could go on but very slowly.' On the following day the roads were 'abundantly worse'; the snow was deeper, the causeways being in places impassable 'because the hard frost succeeding the thaw had made all the ground like glass.' While the travellers had to walk, the horses fell down several times. Turnpike roads were not yet known in that part of England, so that Wesley and his companions 'were at a loss how to proceed' until 'an honest man of Newcastle' conducted them into the town. 'Many a rough journey have I had before, but one like this I never had,' said Wesley: 'between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and

driving sleet, and piercing cold.' Quite as dangerous, probably, was the excessive rain of the early part of 1746, a year famous for having seen the last battle on British ground. In the neighbourhood of Stroud, 'the brooks were so swollen with the late rain that the common roads were impassable; but our guide, knowing the country, carried us round about through the fields, so that we escaped the dangerous waters, and soon after sunset came (wet and dirty enough) to Eversham.'

Some days later, and farther north, this rain changed to snow, and there was not only a great increase of cold but some likelihood of danger through missing the road. On the edge of the moors a countryman was asked which was the way to Stafford. 'Sir, 'tis a thousand pound to a penny that you do not come there to-day,' he replied. 'Why, 'tis four long miles to the far side of this common; and in a clear day, I am not sure to go right across it: and now all the roads are covered with snow; and it snows so that you cannot see before you.' Nothing daunted, however, the travellers went straight forward, and came to their destination.

Winter in spring was as common then as it is now, especially in exceptional seasons. In the far north the hills would be covered with snow as late as the end of April. On April 25, 1770, 'three young women, attempting to cross the mountain to Blair, were swallowed up in the snow.'

Of course, in those old coaching days, the adventures on the road were more numerous and

more romantic than aught that we associate with our modern railway trains. June 1751 appears to have been a wet time, 'the waters greatly out in the road' in the neighbourhood of Epworth, and the bridge being hidden, the York Coach was overturned into the river. 'Yet no passenger was hurt, only dripping wet.' By the help of a guide alone did Wesley and some others manage to pass.

On account of the bad roads of those days a chaise would become 'set,' as country-people say, and at times the crisis would be such as would baffle the resources of the most seasoned traveller. An example of this occurred in Cheshire towards the end of March 1772. 'I preached at Nantwich about noon,' says Wesley, 'and then dragged through a miserable road till, within two or three miles of Whitechurch, the chaise stuck fast, and all our strength could not get it a yard farther. So I took horse and rode to the town.'

Occasionally a coach would break down through being overloaded. While on the way to Birmingham, 'having six persons within and eight without, the coach could not bear the burden but broke down about three in the morning.' Then, 'having pitched it together,' the party went on until another coach was procured; 'but in an hour or two this broke also; and one of the horses was so thoroughly tired, that he could hardly get one foot before the other.' But even worse mishaps than this might befall a traveller in those old times. 'I went to Norwich in the stage-coach,' remarks Wesley

(February 15, 1779), 'with two very disagreeable companions, called a gentleman and a gentlewoman, but equally ignorant, insolent, lewd, and profane.'

In the early days of the Revival, some considerable risk would be incurred when those who owned a carriage were obliging enough to ask a Methodist preacher to take a seat in it. When preaching in the neighbourhood of Hull in 1752, 'many behaved as if possessed by Molech.' Dangerous missiles flew about, and when Wesley 'went to take coach' the driver had retreated, but a lady offered a seat in her own coach. 'She brought some inconveniences on herself thereby,' it is added; 'not only as there were nine of us in the coach, three on each side, and three in the middle; but also as the mob closely attended us, throwing in at the windows (which we did not think it prudent to shut) whatever came next to hand. But a large gentlewoman who sat in my lap, screened me, so that nothing came near me.'

Such missile-throwing was of course quite illegal, and occasionally severe punishment would be dealt out to rioters when cases were taken into court. In 1750 Wesley describes what kind of adventures could be experienced at Holyhead while waiting for the boat for Dublin:—

'At seven in the evening, just as I was going down to preach, I heard a huge noise, and took knowledge of the rabble of gentlemen. They had now strengthened themselves with drink and numbers, and placed Captain Gr—— (as they called

him) at their head. He soon burst open the outward and inner door, struck old Robert Griffith, our landlord, several times, kicked his wife, and with twenty full-mouthed oaths and curses, demanded "Where is the Parson?" Robert Griffith came up, and desired me to go into another room, where he locked me in.'

At length the most effective *quietus* for 'the Captain,' was the pail of water with which 'Robert Griffith's daughter' greeted him, and 'covered him from head to foot.' His behaviour under that treatment was characteristic of a coward, however—'He cried as well as he could, "M—urder! Murder!" and stood very still for some moments.' Soon, he was anxious to get away, and was allowed to depart.

To ordinary people the main roads were always dangerous in consequence of the numbers of highway robbers who infested them; but, as might have been expected, Wesley went on his way quite unmolested. 'I have travelled all roads, by day and by night, for these forty years,' he remarks in 1777, 'and never was interrupted yet.' Nevertheless, the revelations he makes concerning dangers to which travellers were exposed from robbers are striking evidence of the extreme degeneracy of the times. 'Just at this time (1777) there was a combination among many of the post-chaise drivers on the Bath-road, especially those that drove in the night, to deliver their passengers into each other's hands. One driver stopped at the spot they had appointed, where another waited to attack

the chaise. In consequence of this many were robbed.'

No roadside robber who knew him would ever have robbed John Wesley, and on account of this immunity from such adventures we look in vain in Wesley's Diary for any realistic descriptions of 'gentlemen of the road'; but from the testimony of others not so fortunate, we pretty well know what they were like. In the Autobiography of Captain R. W. Eastwick we have some references to the northern suburbs of London, as they were in Wesley's time: 'Eastwick explored the country round about Edmonton, and especially such wild places as Finchley, which was then a wooded waste infested with footpads, or the hills about Highgate and Hornsey.' He then enters into particulars concerning one representative character:—

'Many desperate characters haunted these parts with designs against travellers journeying to or from London. I remember one whom I often saw, a well-dressed man mounted on a fine grey horse, and who frightened me with his grey and sombre visage. Whenever he met me on the high-road, he would ask me what coaches or chaises I had observed passing, and question me and cross-question me in a bullying way, and fix me with his piercing black eyes until I felt inclined to call out from fright. He had a wonderful way of appearing suddenly, and without warning, by bounding into the middle of the road with a leap when he was least expected, and drawing his horse up on its haunches, all done so quickly and quietly that he

seemed like a phantom horseman, and we used among ourselves to call him the Grey Ghost.'

Of course this man got caught and hanged; and a visit to the gibbet of the robber who had exercised so strange a fascination over him, so affected Eastwick as a child that a long illness was the consequence. Think of the degraded custom of placing such gibbets on the highways with the idea of checking crime! Being placed in lonely spots they naturally inspired superstitious terror, and must have been a source of danger to numbers of benighted travellers of nervous temperament. The child Eastwick visited the gibbet of his quondam friend the Grey Ghost, *e.g.*:—

'It was the first time I had looked upon Death, and a great quaking seized me. But presently I recovered a little, and even drew closer to him, and impelled by some hideous prompting, I caught hold of one of his feet and gave him a jog; whereupon the body began to swing slowly to and fro in the air, and with the movement his head wagged with a curious sort of jerk, and his eyes appeared to open and shut, so that he seemed alive again. And now I desired to run away, but found myself unable to do so, being fixed fast there under the evil glance of his eyes, as he winked at me, standing just beneath him, and grinned. After a little while I felt myself beginning to grin too, and then a fit of laughter seized me which I could not control, and I laughed, and laughed back at him, yet without any meaning in my laughter, until I fell down from exhaustion.'

It may be said that this was an exceptional case; but there are many on whom the sight of one they had known in life, thus hanging in chains at a lonely roadside spot, would have produced similar effects. It was a custom worthy only of barbarous laws and of less civilised times. To solitary travellers of a nervous temperament, it must have been almost more trying to come suddenly upon such a frightful object as the gibbet above described than actually to confront a live robber on the road.

Bad roads, dirty towns reeking with the miasma of disease, poor inns and repellent private lodgings were all more commonplace than could be the case to-day. Very well remembered is Johnson's remark to Boswell on his arrival at Edinburgh, 'I smell you in the dark.' In 1751 Wesley referred to the Scottish capital as 'one of the dirtiest cities I had ever seen, not excepting Cölen in Germany.' Of course all towns were a contrast as regarded their ill-kept condition compared with what they are to-day. The mishaps and uncertainties of the road also added to the uncertainties of travel — pleasurable or otherwise, as the case might be. The following relates to Wesley's northern journey at Midsummer 1752:—

'I had many little trials in this journey, of a kind I had not known before. I had borrowed a young, strong mare, when I set out from Manchester. But she fell lame before I got to Grimsby. I procured another, but was dismounted again between Newcastle and Berwick. At my

return to Manchester, I took my own: but she had lamed herself in the pasture. I thought, nevertheless, to ride her four or five miles to-day; but she was gone out of the ground, and we could hear nothing of her. However, I comforted myself, that I had another at Manchester, which I had lately bought. But when I came thither, I found one had borrowed her too, and rode her away to Chester.'

Then even in regard to lodgings this great chief of the Methodist preachers met with adventures which would not be to the taste of modern travellers. The time is still Midsummer 1752:—

'I preached at six to an abundance of people near Ewood; and with an uncommon blessing. Hence we rode to Todmorden. The minister was slowly recovering from a violent fit of a palsy, with which he was struck immediately after he had been preaching a virulent sermon against the Methodists. I preached on the side of a mountain, to a large and earnest congregation, and then went on to Mellar-barn. I preached at six in the town; and I suppose all the inhabitants, young and old, were present. Nor have I seen so large a congregation, so universally and deeply affected. My lodging was not such as I should have chosen; but what Providence chooses is always good. My bed was considerably under ground, serving both for a bed-chamber and a cellar. The closeness was more troublesome at first than the coolness: but I let in a little fresh air, by breaking

a pane of paper (put by way of glass) in the window; and then slept sound till the morning.'

The inconveniences as well as the pleasures of the road greatly varied, and differed in character in widely separated parts of the country. Travellers would at times arrive in a town where all the inns were full; and even when rooms might be obtained at a private house, there might be nothing to eat. In one instance 'there was nothing to be bought in the town; neither flesh, nor fish, nor butter nor cheese.' But even in such an extreme case perseverance conquers; for 'at length we procured some eggs and bread, and were well contented.' In those days it was usually reported south of the Border that the Scottish inns were repellent; but in 1753 we find Wesley giving more favourable testimony. At Dumfries 'as well as wherever we called in our whole journey, we had not only everything we wanted, but everything readily and in good order, and as clean as I ever desire.' Now and then, however, a well-furnished board and a good bed would have the undesirable drawback of being excessively dear. The inconveniences might even be increased by difficulty in procuring conveyances during severe wintry weather. All of these hardships fell to Wesley's lot in the Norwich district early in 1765. 'It was noon before we could procure a post-chaise. We then pushed on, though the snow lay deep on the ground, to the great inn at Hockerell, the dearest house I ever was at. So fare it well.'

Wesley was an interested observer of Nature, and occasionally we have accounts of natural phenomena for which our own experience hardly enables us to account. At the end of May 1757 he was in the Whitehaven district of Cumberland, and he gives this description of the outlook:—

'I was surprised to see, not only hedges and shrubs without a green leaf upon them, but abundance of trees likewise naked as in the depth of winter. Upon inquiring, I found that some time before, a violent wind had gone through all those parts, which not only threw down chimneys, walls and barns, and tore up trees by the roots, but scorched every green thing it touched as with fire, so that all the leaves immediately fell off, and not only bushes and fruit-trees, but elms, oaks, and firs, withered away to the very roots.'

Similar effects of an uncommon kind of wind were to be seen in the Camborne district of Cornwall in September of the year already named, *e.g.*:—

'I observed more and more the effects of that burning wind which was in these parts on Sunday, the 28th of last month. It not only scorched all the leaves of the trees, so as to bring mid-winter upon them in two hours, but burned up all the leaves of potatoes and cabbage, and every green thing which it touched. What a mercy it did not come a month sooner! Then, it would have left little work for the reapers.'

A chief inconvenience, or even terror, to travellers in the eighteeenth century, was the ferry. While

moving about by railway in various parts of the country, we may still here or there come to a station which is named after one of these crossings, which in their day were more or less dreaded even by the adventurous. At the end of July 1764 Wesley was in South Wales. 'We returned through heavy rain to Pembroke.' In a district where ferries abounded a persistent downpour had the natural effect of swelling the streams, or even of turning large rivers into rushing torrents. After leaving Pembroke, the travellers 'rode up and down steep and stony mountains for about five hours,' when on coming to Larn a ferry confronted them. There, however, they were fortunate in procuring 'a pretty ready passage,' and this sent them forward in good spirits to Lansteffan. There they met with adventures of a more alarming kind, not in the stream itself, but in its approaches—'We were in some danger of being swallowed up in the mud before we could reach the water.' When at length he reached Kidwelly, after being seven hours in the saddle, Wesley was a wiser man than when he set out; for in the same time 'we could have rode round by Carmarthen with more ease both to man and beast.' It was meet, therefore, that travellers should adopt their methods to the circumstances of the situation. 'I have taken my leave of these ferries,' remarks Wesley, and he did so for sufficient reason: 'Considering we save no time in crossing them (not even when we have a ready passage), and so have all the trouble, danger, and expense, clear gains. I wonder that

any man of common sense, who has once made the experiment, should ever ride from Pembroke to Swansea any other way than by Carmarthen.'

Far more perilous even than ferries at their worst were certain wide stretches of sand on the seashore, across which it was not safe to venture without a guide who was well acquainted with the dangerous spots. While he was a careful, he was at all times a perfectly fearless traveller, who observed proper precautions and then trusted in God. On the last day of July 'an honest man of Kidwelly told us there was no difficulty in riding the sands; so we rode on.' However honest the man might be he had given very dangerous advice. Ten minutes later a man came up who was accustomed to act as guide; 'and it was well he did, or in all probability we had been swallowed up.' Probably no more dangerous flat track of ground was to be found in the British Isles. 'The whole sands are at least ten miles over, with many streams of quicksands intermixed;' but with a competent guide the travellers were as safe as they would have been on a high-road.

Just about two years later, or at Midsummer 1766, Wesley and his travelling companion Duncan Wright were actually 'embogged' in the Solway Firth district. After a short halt at Dumfries the travellers determined to push forward 'before the sea was come in.' There was another inn which they wished to reach, and on making inquiries, they were directed to take what seemed to be a straight road; but in a few minutes 'Duncan

Wright was embogged'; but because 'the horse plunged on,' Duncan got through and climbed out somewhat after the manner of Christian's escape from the Slough of Despond. Wesley himself was less fortunate, and presently his situation became less heroic. 'I was inclined to turn back,' he remarks; 'but Duncan telling me I needed only go a little to the left, I did so, and sank at once to my horse's shoulders. He sprung up twice, and twice sunk again, each time deeper than before. At the third plunge he threw me on one side, and we both made shift to scramble out. I was covered with fine, soft mud, from my feet to the crown of my head; yet, blessed be God, not hurt at all.' It was not considered prudent to attempt to cross for some time afterwards; and then, happily, 'an honest man' again appeared on the scene, who went some two miles out of his way in order to act as guide. On coming to Skilburness, Wesley and Duncan 'found a little clean house and passed a comfortable night.'

In the days of Wesley's itinerancy over the British Isles short sea-crossings, which are now effected by fast and comfortable passenger steamers, were actually hazardous voyages. In the case of the Isle of Wight, one who wished to cross from Portsmouth had the choice of hiring a wherry or making one among many other passengers on a hoy. In October 1758 Wesley declined the wherry because 'the watermen were so extravagant in their demands.' It was not long before he had cause to be thankful that he had done so; 'for the

sea was so high, it would not have been easy for a small boat to keep above water.' On landing, it was found to be 'five little miles to Newport.'

The crossing from the Land's End to the Scilly Isles was of course more formidable or dangerous on account of the greater length of passage; real were the dangers of those seas where many brave ships had met their fate, including some which belonged to the British navy. In the early days of his itinerancy Wesley had frequently expressed the wish to preach in the Scilly Isles, 'if it were but for one day.' When he was at the Land's End in September 1743, three friends volunteered to undertake the voyage if the Mayor's boat could be procured, that being the best sailer. Accordingly, Wesley and two friends 'with three men and a pilot' set sail from St. Ives. The passage then occupied the greater part of a day, and was trying to the nerves of timid people. 'It seemed strange to me to attempt going in a fisher-boat fifteen leagues upon the main ocean,' says Wesley; 'especially when the waves began to swell, and hang over our heads.' On landing at St. Mary's early in the afternoon, the visitors 'immediately waited upon the Governor, with the usual present, viz. a newspaper.' Although the poor islanders had a minister who was not willing that Wesley should preach in the church, they contrasted very favourably with the mob at St. Ives, who would violently oppose the preachers, 'roaring, and striking those that stood in their way, as though Legion himself possessed them.' On the return

voyage it was not reassuring to hear the pilot say 'we should have good luck if we reached the land,' but all ended well.

Travelling by chair may have been considered the most effeminate mode of locomotion; for when still weak from recent illness we find Wesley yielding to a gentleman's offer to be carried in his chair to Brentford. In a usual way, however, he was always best accommodated when on horseback. On a certain occasion, indeed, in 1777, when his heart was 'much out of order,' he derived direct benefit during a ride from York to Tadcaster: 'I borrowed a horse; but as he was none of the easiest, in riding three miles I was so thoroughly electrified, that the pain in my heart was quite cured.'

Although no man was ever more indebted to fresh air than Dr. Johnson, he affected to believe that neither fresh air nor exercise had anything to do with good health. Even great men who talk much are sure to say some things beside the mark, and his most ardent admirers must admit that Dr. Johnson talked more than his share of nonsense. According to his observation, people lived as long in Pepper Alley as others did on Salisbury Plain! To Wesley, exercise and fresh air were a panacea for many human ills, and without them his favourite electricity might have been found wanting. Just before he started on his western journey in the summer of 1751, he happened to call on 'a gentleman in the City' who was not only 'thin and pale,' but showed 'all the marks of an approaching consumption.' Forthwith, the friend

was asked if he did not think that a journey would do him 'more good than a heap of medicines?' He thought that it might be so, and, accordingly, he set out with Wesley for Cornwall.

Thus, we see that travelling in the eighteenth century was more adventurous than it is in our times. It was in a sense more romantic; but those who prefer comfort and swiftness will appreciate the changes which have resulted in things being as they are to-day.

CHAPTER V

SOME PHASES OF TOWN AND VILLAGE LIFE

IN those memorable days of what we may call a second Reformation, when as a duty, year after year, Wesley regularly made his tour of the country, the difference between town and village life would not be so great as it is at present. The reason is obvious; for many centres which are now great and densely crowded towns, were then little more than what we should now call large villages. The heavy drawback of life in a great town at the opening of the twentieth century is that the country is too far off to be readily accessible; but in early Georgian days the trees and the fields were not in any instance far away from the City's boundaries. At the same time, a tourist who travelled a hundred miles or so from the capital may have found the contrast between London and the country in some respects greater than it is to ourselves. The towns generally, as well as places at the seaside, which began to be more largely visited, all had their own local manners and customs, which of course added fresh entertainment to the visitors. In town and country alike,

MR. BLACKWELL'S HOUSE, LEWISHAM.
(*Wesley's place of retirement for rest and work.*)

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there was less of hurry and excitement. Life under such conditions had many compensations which we do not possess; but, nevertheless, the eighteenth century can hardly be regarded as the golden age for home comfort and outdoor enjoyment. People had more leisure and did their work more quietly. There existed what would be to us formidable drawbacks, and the promises of Puritanism had not been realised. No social or political seer could have descried the wonderful developments of the future.

As regarded town and village life alike, as contrasted with that of London, a chief characteristic was its seclusion. Wesley was always in love with the country; he took in the charms of a fine landscape at a glance, and so differed from his friend Dr. Johnson, who was too short-sighted to see either pictures or natural scenery. It was because the country thus became monotonous to him that Johnson liked the outlook of Fleet Street better than the finest view of the Scottish Highlands. The seclusion of country life was perfect; it must have offered great charm to genuine lovers of unbroken quiet and retirement.

Each village or town community was more completely isolated from the rest of the world than can readily be realised. Through the badness of roads, and the consequent difficulty of transit, bread might be excessively dear in one county and cheap in another; and even after the forming of canals, which were of great benefit in equalising the supplies, prices would very considerably vary.

Comparatively few persons travelled far from the place of their nativity, for the reason that they were unable to do so. The rich kept horses, or they travelled by coach or post-chaise; the poor walked, or, if they could afford the luxury, paid for a place in a waggon to visit the county town, which was to them the most distinguished place in the world. Especially when viewed at a distance, there is charm in the seclusion then characteristic of such towns or villages; but that charm comes chiefly from the descriptions of old-time writers who have referred to the subject. If we could come to nearer acquaintance with it, however, the lack of what are now commonplace advantages, the low condition of the common people, as well as a very much smaller middle-class than now adds wealth to the country, would at once correct our illusion. The ignorant lacked instructors; the cultivated might be found pining for companionship; and those who, like Dr. Johnson, valued social enjoyment above everything else in life, naturally thought that there was no hope for them but to seek refuge in London.

Inns, as taverns or public-houses were then commonly called, were quite a distinctive national institution. In course of his constant travels Wesley was of course compelled to make use of roadside hostelries; he could have better told one which were the good inns, and which were more indifferent, about the country than any other man of his time. No man more ardently testified against the abuse of a thing, however; and the

drinking customs of the time tended toward abuse in this direction even in the case of professing Christian people, in a way which now would be contrary to our ideas of propriety.

A case in point happened when Wesley was a young man, and some few years prior to the breaking out of that glorious Revival which we associate with Methodism. At Bridlington in Yorkshire there was a divine of superior scholarship who had turned Nonconformist after he had received a University training for the Established Church. By name George Braithwaite, this man was a good preacher and able writer, and was, besides, a genuine spiritually-minded man, who was a long way ahead of his time as a social reformer. As an observer of life and of popular tendencies even in the church, he was led to publish a small work—*The Nation's Reproach, and the Church's Grief; or a Serious, Needful Word of Advice to those who Needlessly Frequent Taverns, and Public-houses, and often spend the Evenings There.* This custom was so general among all ranks of people, that even a Christian pastor who objected was looked upon as a mere faddist; and in this instance such a *furor* was raised, that Braithwaite resigned his pastorate, left that part of the country and settled in London.

It is sometimes supposed that our peasants have suffered rather than benefited by modern improvements. 'The good old times' are a reality to many elderly people who do not realise that they themselves have altered far more than the times.

In the earlier days of the Revival, Wesley gave full attention to Eversham and its lovely valley watered by the Avon; but the enemy was so strong, that in 1761 he 'found the poor shattered Society sunk almost to nothing.' It was difficult to make any impression on the people; and on one occasion, while preaching in the Town Hall, many of the congregation walked to and fro, 'laughing and talking as if they had been in Westminster Abbey.' Years later the opposing mob had their chief encouragement from a local magistrate; but in regard to dirt and stones, the peasants were less violent than some others. The rich and beautiful natural outlook was a sorry contrast indeed to the poverty and degradation of the working classes. No man was ever more disposed to make allowances than Wesley; and he well knew that want and squalor were the cause of many other evils. When parents were hard-pinched there would be less chance of any school being found for the children; and when there was unceasing worry about temporal supplies, even the spiritual needs of the soul might be also allowed to go to the wall. Thus a gross and ignorant age is necessarily one of suffering; sanitation and the welfare of the poor have something to do with Christianity.

The drawbacks to daily life in the Vale of Eversham in the days of Wesley's prime were very evident, and he would warmly sympathise with the sufferers. Village bakers preferred for humble folk to be in their debt in order that there should be no restriction on short weight and poor quality.

It was not uncommon for a shilling loaf to be found half a pound short weight; and, besides, it might be 'so badly manufactured that it was almost impossible for any human being to eat it.' It was believed that bakers and farmers combined to raise wheat to an artificial value at the expense of the poor. We can hardly wonder that some years later there were complaints that the degraded condition of the peasants was strengthening their tendency to crime. The clergy are mentioned as being spectators rather than actors in the cause of reformation; and their aid was asked in bringing in a better state of things. We do not know to what pass things might not have come had not the Methodist Revival had the effect of improving the outlook.

Happily, there are more cheerful pictures of life, especially as regards those who were not of the peasant class. The American War not only darkened the last quarter of the eighteenth century, it caused a heavy rise in the price of the necessaries of life. Nevertheless, it was possible for persons of independent means to choose a place of residence where supplies were much cheaper than the average market value. Thus, one such person wrote in 1783: 'I have been a great traveller, and have occasionally visited many parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, but have never met with any residence where a retired family might make a small independent income go as far as at Bridgnorth, and with so many advantages.'

It was also noticed that in the town mentioned

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freedom from epidemical diseases was enjoyed even when they were raging in the districts around. The distance of one hundred and forty miles from London made it too far for perishable supplies to be sent thither. Pigeons were about a penny each; farm and garden produce was surprisingly cheap; while fish without stint could be had for nothing by disciples of Walton who were addicted to 'the contemplative man's recreation.' House rent was excessively cheap; and it must have been a kind of golden age for those who needed domestic servants. 'I knew an elderly gentlewoman here lately,' writes our unknown informant just referred to, 'who had a most handy and diligent servant-maid, that lived with her several years, even to her death, for fifty shillings per annum wages.'

The Bridgnorth resident does not enlighten us concerning the poor; but, without doubt, the truth was that rich supplies and beautiful landscapes, here as elsewhere, failed to contribute to the moral and religious elevation. It is suggestive that Wesley betrays some misgivings on account of his people when they were found to 'increase in goods.' The well-to-do too often took it for granted that those beneath them must necessarily be degraded. Instead of contributing in any way to advance their true interests, the rich contented themselves by giving their doles, which may probably have done more harm than good. Some would tell us that the times were more sociable than our own, and that there was more hospitality; but the society, such as it was, would be very

select; in a sense, the proverb was verified, only birds of a feather flew together. In and around Bridgnorth, music was very generally cultivated, and musical assemblies were common; but it is hardly likely that such reunions did anything to break down the partition wall of social distinction.

It is shown that the Gospel flourished in some measure in the town and surrounding villages; but by an ordinary man of the world religious matters would be referred to in a way which is not very reassuring. In a conventional way religious services may be reckoned among popular attractions; but they are evidently minor ones when put in the balance with plentiful supplies and cheap markets. Still, church services are mentioned as advantages not to be ignored, especially by 'persons in the decline of life who wish to be supported by the comforts of religion.' Prospective residents are told of 'spacious churches' wherein prayer is 'daily performed throughout the year,' sermons being preached regularly on Sundays. The idea of 'performing the Common Prayer' would hardly have been to the taste of Wesley and leaders of the Revival as being in keeping with the principles of the Reformation; but the phrase is still used by some prison chaplains, and by others whose *patois* is merely conventional. Then it is a symptom of apathy and deadness when religion is supposed to be chiefly suitable for those who are in the decline of life.

It was thought to be a drawback, that the clergy should be so often drawn from the lower strata of

society; and it is never a hopeful sign when social prestige is rated higher than capacity for service. Where would Wesley and his work have been if he had been guided by such a principle? But while the Methodist leader confined himself to scriptural methods, he was always a keen observer of human nature, and one who was always interested in the characteristics or tendencies of the times. The peasantry, the middle-class, genteel people, the clergy, all had their separate aims, and probably thought more of their welfare as a class than of the prosperity of the country at large. Thus, the country gentleman, as he lived at home in those far-off times, seems to open to us the vista of an obsolete world. One observer, writing in 1780, says: 'I never see a young heir fluttering about town in the circle of gaiety without feeling an emotion of compassion. In a few years, when he comes to be supplanted in that circle by a younger set, no resource remains for him but a retreat to the country, where he must either pass his days in listless inactivity or pursuits unworthy of a rational being.' When compared with the experience of Sir Roger de Coverley, as sketched by Addison, this may appear to be a somewhat prejudiced view; but Sir Roger is an ideal, rather than an actual, character. The conventional country gentleman, as portrayed by one who took notice of his ways in the time of Wesley, was an *ennui*-worried and worrying being, whose chief drawback in life was want of occupation to keep him out of mischief; and who at the same

time went about as though the care of the country-side weighed upon him. It seemed to be his special vocation to correct shortcomings in the poor; even the peccadilloes of peasant neighbours would at times rouse his anger in an extraordinary manner. 'From living in a narrow circle,' remarks a contemporary observer of the country gentleman as Wesley knew him, 'he had contracted a peculiarity in his notions which sometimes amused from its oddity; and from conversing chiefly with persons rather of an inferior station to himself, he had become as tenacious of his opinions as if they had been self-evident truths, and as impatient of contradiction as if to differ from him had been a crime.'

The kind of relationship which existed between landowners and the classes beneath them is further shown in the regrets which many expressed on account of a loss of rustic simplicity, which, it was alleged, had taken place. Such alleged deterioration of manners doubtless chiefly existed in the imaginations of elderly persons; but there may still have been some foundation for complaints which were made concerning ill effects which followed the adulteration of village life by the dissipated manners of the capital. According to certain conservative rustics who were very outspoken in regard to rural grievances, good roads and well-appointed coaches had brought about many changes for the worse. 'When my Lord and the Esquire and the Rector, left off keeping Christmas at the old mansion, the country felt the

want of ancient hospitality and affability,' we find one remarking: 'the sick poor man lost the fostering hand of his richer neighbour or master, and the friendly advice of the worthy Justice, or pious pastor. But when they brought down a suite who imported the fashions of London, an insensible change was wrought in the farmers' sons, and communicated to the whole parish.' Girls were demoralised in common with their brothers, so that Goldsmith's account of how the daughters of Dr. Primrose were captivated by the follies of fashion may not be over-coloured. Girls became dissatisfied with the plainness of country life; while they hoped to relieve its monotony by imitating the airs and dress of those who follow the fashion of the town. Of course snares were laid for such unknowing ones; and of course, like unwary birds, they fell into them. We thus, as it were, look into those old times through the spectacles of elderly persons who were then living; but certain of the tendencies complained of are common to every age.

It is seen that in those days, in common with our own times, undesirable amusements were in antagonism to true religion. Thus we find it stated, that 'another grand source of the corruption of the rustic mind is the introduction of theatres into almost every market-town, either by authority of Parliament or in defiance of it.' The question of the general tendency of stage-plays is too large a one to be discussed here; it is enough to give the testimonies of eye-witnesses as we find them. In Christian circles theatres and lotteries

were regarded as working hand-in-hand together for the lowering of the standard of public morality.

The low condition of life in villages and towns alike, both morally and spiritually, is vividly shown in the experience of Hannah More, who distinguished herself as a philanthropist before such efforts as she made among the poor became fashionable. The details are too well known to need being repeated; but although Miss More was not at first so evangelical as the Wesleys and their preachers, her work was no doubt inspired by the Revival which was sweeping through the British Isles. The gross ignorance of the lower orders was quite equalled by the intolerance of those who were supposed to be their betters. Incredible as some of the admissions of Hannah More may seem to be, her adventures were similar to those of others in the same field. It was remarked by William Jay of Bath: 'The spiritual condition of many of the villagers was deplorable, and the people were perishing for lack of knowledge. No one cared for their souls.' As a student, Jay had been accustomed to visit the villages around Marlborough. As teachers of the poor, he and others were careful to avoid giving any occasion of offence; they abstained from preaching during church hours, after Wesley's example; and no services at all were held in time of hay or wheat harvest. Notwithstanding such carefulness, however, some of their rough adventures almost rivalled the experiences of Wesley and Whitefield in days when the work of an evangelist meant Christian heroism.

Still, in the main, they providentially escaped through accepting a tutor's good advice not to rail at others nor to assume that they alone were preachers of the Gospel. 'Yet Mr. Winter's horse was cruelly cropped and maimed at Ablington, where he had preached on the Sabbath,' adds Mr. Jay; and there were places, and not a few out of our own Circuits, where, though there was little or nothing exceptionable in the preaching, the carnal mind showed itself, not only in secret malignity, but in open outrage. The excitement of the ignorant populace was commonly produced by the clergyman, the squire, and some of the stupid and intemperate farmers.'

The condition in general of the people of Olney, where William Cowper passed several years during the later part of Wesley's life, reveals some of the best, as well as some of the worst, phases of town and village life in the eighteenth century. The poet remarks: 'Olney is a populous place, inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and ragged of the earth, and it is not possible for our small party and small ability to extend their operations so far as to be much felt among such numbers.' The staple trade was the manufacture of cheap laces; but the work-people were in a poverty-stricken condition consequent on a fall in prices. They were divided into two very distinct classes whom the poet describes: 'In this town, where the Gospel has been preached so many years, where the people have been favoured so long with laborious and conscientious ministers, it is not an easy thing to find

those who make no profession of religion at all, and are yet proper objects of charity. The profane are so profane, so drunken, dissolute, and in every respect worthless, that to make them partakers of his bounty would be to abuse it.' This refers to a grant of money which a Mr. Smith had sent for the relief of the poor. It is pleasant to learn that in spite of grinding poverty, industry and honesty frequently characterised the same persons; but such was the condition of the people generally, that 'the most watchful and unremitting labour' barely sufficed to procure them bread. I am not aware that Wesley ever preached at Olney; but in course of his constant travels he would become acquainted with other similar instances of the privations of the poor. As the parish church of Olney was for so long served by a succession of evangelical preachers, Wesley may have avoided the town, thinking that other places more urgently needed attention. Then residents like the poet and Mrs. Unwin, as strong adherents of Whitefield and the Calvinists, would show a somewhat one-sided sympathy with the Methodist Revival. Otherwise, Cowper's picture of how people lived is a revelation of hardship and suffering on the one hand, and a determination on the part of many to lay hold of better and more enduring things than anything earth could supply. No doubt that Cowper himself was as contented in such a place as he would have been elsewhere, although at times he too felt the inconvenience of straitened means. He preferred the quiet of provincial life

to the excitement and business of London, which in his saner moments he actually abhorred.

Thus, in the life of Cowper we see some of the best, as well as the more objectional, phases of provincial life in the eighteenth century. We see what were the charms of genteel prestige and learned leisure before the era of modern progress set in. We see also that, with about half its present population, the country showed the existence of poverty on a large scale; while popular disturbances at elections, and even at less harmless functions, would reach a climax in riot which sometimes seemed to be a symptom of revolution. The little world of Olney showed many suggestive contrasts. At one time our poet, having turned glazier, needs a diamond before he can replace the broken kitchen windows. He makes reference to pine-plants, and also to tame pigeons which were fed on the garden walk when he was in one of his happiest moods. But who can realise what an election riot was like in a provincial town in those good old times? During the Parliamentary campaign of 1784, the opposing candidates adopted the very desirable, but most unusual, resolution that no public-houses should be open for the giving of free refreshment to the common people. The mere mention of such an innovation aroused popular indignation to fever heat; to put it in practice naturally produced a dangerous riot.

The more we look into its characteristics, the more clearly does the eighteenth century seem to stand out as a period by itself, differing as greatly

from times which went before, as well as from those which followed. Daily life seems to have gone on in a more leisurely manner; no one foresaw the marvellous peaceful revolution which science and industrial enterprise were about to effect. It was a period of great opportunities, many of which were never turned to account, partly owing to the wave of Socinianism, which had the effect of checking or deadening Christian enterprise. While such things are serious drawbacks, the eighteenth century has interesting features which are peculiarly its own.

At different times much has been said about the amiable life and simple manners of George III. and Queen Caroline. Wesley had a good opinion even of George II. as a king; and accordingly he would have a far greater reverence for his successor, the personal character of the man himself being so much higher. Being a Christian man, he was farmer-like in build and habit; he has even been supposed to have been typical of John Bull, who represents the English nation. In the early years of a very long reign, the good King loved rural retirement; and a contemporary magazine sketch of royal life at Kew in the summer of 1775 is one of the pleasantest things to be met with in historical byways.

George III. was then thirty-seven years of age. The custom was for both King and Queen to rise each morning at six o'clock, and for two hours the time was considered to be especially their own. At eight o'clock the Prince of Wales, then aged

thirteen, the Princess Royal, and some other juveniles of the household, were 'brought from their several houses to Kew House to breakfast with their illustrious relatives.' An hour later, 'their younger children attend to lisp their good-morrows,' it is added; 'and whilst the five eldest are closely applying to their task, their little ones and their nurses pass the whole morning in Richmond Gardens.'

The King and Queen made a pastime of seeing their children dine; and occasionally the whole family together made 'the delightful tour' of the extensive pleasure-grounds attached to the palace. The hours of the afternoon were whiled away in an equally pleasant manner; for while Queen Caroline plied her needle, her royal husband read to her; the well-matched couple having thus shown as charming a picture of domestic felicity as could then have been found. The anonymous writer adds: 'Topography is one of his favourite studies; he copies every capital chart, takes the models of all the celebrated fortifications, knows the soundings of the chief harbours in Europe, and the strong and weak side of most fortified towns. He can name every ship in his navy, and he keeps lists of the commanders.' It was seen, nevertheless, that George III.'s education had been neglected; otherwise, more might have been expected of him 'in the arts of government.' Whether George was conscious of educational deficiencies, is not mentioned; but, if so, he was not willing that others should suffer in a similar way; for 'eight

hours close application to the languages and the liberal sciences' was the young people's daily task.

In an age characterised by luxury and excess, both in eating and drinking, Wesley, by precept and example, gave his testimony in favour of temperance in a very unmistakable way; but in this respect his voice was that of one preaching in the wilderness. A spare, plain diet, no dram-drinking, and great moderation in beer and wine, would have been Wesley's prescription; and he plainly perceived that one of the chief causes of ill-health was excess in diet and its accompaniments. As regarded the King, he was an exemplar such as Wesley himself must have gratefully approved; for it was said that 'his Majesty feeds chiefly on vegetables, and drinks little wine: the Queen is what many private gentlemen would call whimsically abstemious; for at a table covered with dainties, she culls the plainest and simplest dish, and seldom eats of more than two things at a meal.' What pleased people still more, English manufactures were encouraged at the palace; and tradesmen's bills were all regularly paid once a quarter. There was a dark background to the pleasant picture, however; for symptoms of the King's insanity had already appeared, although the people knew nothing of the matter.

The characteristics of daily life away from London afforded many contrasts in different parts of the United Kingdom; and in remote corners of Scotland and Ireland such contrasts may be quite as remarkable now as was the case a century

and a half ago. As a traveller, Wesley was a hero in his day; and that distinction would have been accorded him had he written more about the scenes he had looked upon, and the adventurous experiences he had passed through in his travels. In the accounts of his travels, Defoe had already revealed to Londoners what was practically an unknown world—the outlook and daily life of the provinces. Dr. Johnson's Scottish Tour was read with similar wonder. After describing a Highland hut, having a fire on its earth floor, and a hole in the roof to carry off the smoke, Dr. Johnson adds: 'Such is the general structure of the houses in which one of the nations of this opulent and powerful island has been hitherto content to live.' Still, Boswell shows that many in the country of Loch Ness were content: 'I perceived a little hut, with an old-looking woman at the door of it. I thought here might be a scene that would amuse Dr. Johnson; so I mentioned it to him. "Let's go in,' said he. We dismounted, and we and our guides entered the hut. It was a wretched little hovel of earth only, I think, and for a window had only a small hole, which was stopped with a piece of turf, that was taken out occasionally to let in light. In the middle of the room or space which we entered was a fire of peat, the smoke going out at a hole in the roof. She had a pot upon it, with goat's flesh boiling. There was at one end, under the same roof, but divided by a kind of partition made of wattles, a pen or fold in which we saw a good many kids.'

The woman asked her visitors to partake of refreshment; and it seems she walked four Scottish miles to attend the kirk service. Her poverty and daily hardship did not depress her heart; and they do not seem to have been an obstacle to progress in the Christian life.

But both Addison and Goldsmith give us pictures which are an insight into the rural life of their time more charming than anything told by Johnson, whose sight was too bad to allow of his seeing nature or life to perfection. Who that has read for a purpose at all is not familiar with their descriptions? But of course the pictures of the best side of country life either in the *Spectator* or in the *Vicar of Wakefield* have to be taken with a grain of salt. The notions of Dr. Primrose concerning the world and the Church, appear to have been in advance of those of others about him; while Sir Roger de Coverley is typical of the best class of landlords of Queen Anne's reign. He is 'a great lover of mankind,' whose tenants grow rich, while his servants always look satisfied. At the same time, servants who could idolise their master could still be so superstitious that at the time of Sir Roger's first coming to the estate the supposed haunted mansion had to be exorcised by the chaplain's sleeping successively in the reputedly haunted rooms. Although Sir Roger is represented as being a father in the village, and professedly a great patron of religion, his character is in measure made up of inconsistencies. It is still fair to note, however, that those grosser

habits depicted by another hand were never intended by Addison to make part of Sir Roger's character at all. He favoured education; and he gave Bibles to boys and girls who answered best at the catechisings. Despite the reformation he is credited with having effected, we fail to discover that he is more than a moral teacher; and he is commended for the practice of preaching other people's sermons! The fact is that Sir Roger is a type of the country squire who liked better the fare which his own money provided than the cut-and-dried platitudes which were then characteristic of the average village pulpit. The chaplain receives a present 'of all the good sermons that have been printed in English'; but only on the understanding that 'every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit.' On a certain Saturday afternoon the squire is heard asking 'Who preached to-morrow?' and the chaplain replies, 'The Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon,' sermons from those preachers being selected for reading at the services. Mr. Spectator then adds, concerning the chaplain: 'He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, when I saw with pleasure, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Sanderson, Doctor Barrow, Doctor Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity.' Much of this so-called 'practical divinity' would not have been valued by Wesley, and this would especially be the case with the moral legalism of the Archbishop. In his blunt

outspokenness, Whitefield went even so far as to say that Tillotson knew no more about the Gospel than a Hottentot. Addison's idea was, however, that if clergymen in the crowded ranks of mediocrity read discourses by good preachers in place of 'laborious compositions of their own,' their hearers would benefit no less than themselves. He fails to see that indolent pastors, who give out what has been prepared by others, become still more incompetent and unprofitable. Still, a village congregation fed as he suggests, would have fared better than would otherwise have been the case. While lacking evangelical sympathies, Addison does not seem to have detected in what pastoral deficiencies consisted. He interests us while writing about the charms of Sunday, maintaining that 'if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would have been the best method that could have been thought of for the civilising of mankind'; but his ideal country-folk are not such as know themselves to be sinners who need a Saviour. His ideal villagers meet to join in the Common Prayer, to learn what their duties are, to talk over the events of the week beneath the shadow of the parish church. 'A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the 'Change.' Still, such country customs are as common to-day as they were in the eighteenth century, when Wesley set his face against them.

Wesley honestly thought that George II. was one of the best of kings; but until the Methodist

Revival set in, the reign was quite unfavourable to religion. Nevertheless, many charming cases of pastoral diligence and of rural simplicity were brought to light, all being welcome revelations of eighteenth-century life.

In the early part of the second half of the century, accounts were written to show the extreme poverty of the clergy in many remote villages. Some useful pastors, who set a good example in their own family, no less than in their parishes, seem to have no more to live upon than agricultural labourers. A curiosity in its way is a contemporary letter of an anonymous writer which was said to be authentic:—

'Going into a clergyman's house I found him sitting at a long square table such as is commonly used in this (north) country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue smock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great heavy wooden-soled shoes, plated with iron to preserve them, what we call clogs in these parts, with a child upon his knee eating his breakfast.' The slender stipend was supplemented by a small grant from Queen Anne's Bounty, and he worked at wool-spinning when he should have been in his study. There was a numerous family as well as an ailing wife, and both the latter and her husband charmed visitors by good-humoured contentment, common sense, and ingenuity. Another friend who visited this clergyman added: 'His family, not excepting

himself, is clothed with stuff of his own manufacture; and if I add that necessity has put him upon working out of the fleece, even to the making them up into wearing apparel, it is but what I have been credibly told. . . . Yet notwithstanding the narrowness of Mr. W.'s circumstances, I don't apprehend that his family want the common necessaries of life; but what will not the fear of want put a man upon doing?' The good man contrived so to manage his affairs that he rather saved a little instead of lapsing into debt; and being a model of Christian contentment, he never troubled himself about preferment. All of his parishioners were satisfied with him, while the incumbent himself was fondly attached to his flock. One said of him: 'The plainness of his dress, the sanctity of his manners, the simplicity of his doctrine, and the vehemence of his expression, have a sort of resemblance to the pure practice of primitive Christianity.' Having been thus discovered and written about, the poor clergyman no doubt attracted for a time much popular attention. We have to remember, however, that the necessaries of life were then much cheaper than they are now; and that his Lenten fare was probably quite as good as that of Wesley and many of the Methodist preachers.

Personally, the poor clergyman had no complaint to make in regard to the hardness of his lot. On the contrary, his confession was: 'I am situated greatly to my satisfaction with regard to the conduct of my auditory, who not only live in the

happy ignorance of the follies and vices of the age, but in mutual peace and goodwill with one another, and are seemingly, and I hope really too, good Christians.' Being the youngest of twelve children, and born of obscure parents, he never inherited any money of his own, but his wife's dowry of forty pounds was turned to good account. Hence, he added: 'Though my income has been but small, and my family large, yet by a providential blessing upon my diligent endeavours, the kindness of friends, and a cheap country to live in, we have always had the necessaries of life.' Under such conditions as these, there might be some romance in everyday eighteenth-century village life.

At the time in question there were many customs connected with the seasons which were naturally much more thought about when a village or town was more of a separate community than is the case at present, the majority of the unlettered inhabitants then being less dependent on the outside world. May-Day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas, would each in turn have observances somewhat different from the popular fashion nowadays. When the means of locomotion were slow and uncertain, there were numbers of people who contracted a passionate love of country ways. The strains in the distance of 'the merrie ploughboy,' 'the mower singing blithe,' or, what was still more effective, 'the plaintive ditty of a milkmaid,' were more acceptable than the most finished performances of musical art. An elderly person is found looking back on 'the pure delights of that

enchanting period when the heart was always open to mirth and joy.' The reference is to days spent at a rectory homestead in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was plainly seen then, as now, that loneliness steals over humanity when age comes on, unless there is the possession of a better hope. Wealth and fame are no substitutes, as those find to their cost who lay up treasure on earth alone. Many an able and successful man has realised that he has been living in a fool's paradise.

The question, How did the rich and poor keep Christmastide in those days of quieter life, and of less pressure from the business competition? is an interesting one; but the references to the festive season are so few and far between, that we are led to infer that it was hardly so much thought of as is the case at present. To Wesley, Christmas, like all other seasons, was one to be improved. He does not seem to have aimed at being in any one particular place to 'keep' Christmas, as would be the case with the majority of people in the present day, and he would hardly have thought of turning the day into the conventional holiday. On Christmas-Eve 1759 he made one of a party at Everton, Mr. Berridge, in whose house the assembly was, being gone to preach before the University of Cambridge. The hard day's work which followed may be taken as a typical Christmas-Day in Wesley's working life. In the morning he was 'a little afraid' that his strength would fail; but having finished morning service 'before two,' he had 'time to breathe' before it was time to begin

again. The season appears to have been a convenient time for taking to the road for Bristol.

We have, otherwise, some charming pictures, written by those who were then young, of how Christmas was observed in the middle of the eighteenth century; and although imagination may have helped to colour their portrayals, they are not on that account less interesting. Those who refer to their early days would have us believe that those times were characterised by greater simplicity than the days of fashion and of vain-glory which followed.

One anonymous writer, as the son of a clergyman, gives a glimpse of life in an English rectory as it was in or about the year 1760. He depicts 'the good rector seated by his own fireside, where every English subject is a sovereign . . . smoking his evening pipe, or playing at piquet with his eldest daughter: the younger children running every minute to the door to listen to the little half-frozen songsters, and take in a supply of berried holly for the windows; the mistress of the family, with exemplary notability, superintending the preparations in the kitchen for the next day's festivity, and bringing in a foretaste in a little silver saucepan that was always used for niceties.' This was no doubt the reminiscence of an old man who contrasted the freshness of youth with the withered leaves of age. He was looking forward to being reunited with the inmates of the rectory in the mansions of the Father's house, where any further anguish of separation would be unknown.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, what are now large market-towns were then no more than considerable villages; and many of these had customs of their own which were more or less curious. Thus, the local customs of one part of Yorkshire were both interesting and picturesque. On the eve of All Saints, the women made something 'for every one in the family, so this is generally called Cake-night,' remarks a contemporary writer; 'and on Christmas-Eve, the grocers send each of their customers a pound, or half a pound, of currants and raisins to make a Christmas pudding. The chandlers also send large mold candles, and the coopers logs of wood, generally called Yule-clogs, which are always used on Christmas-Eve; but should it be so large as not to be all burnt that night, which is frequently the case, the remains is kept till old Christmas-Eve. And on Christmas-Day the singing boys come into the church with large baskets full of red apples, with a sprig of rosemary stuck in each, which they present to all the congregation, and generally have a return made them of twopence, fourpence, or sixpence, according to the quality of the lady or gentleman.' In all parts of the country there were found such local customs, peculiar to their own district; but, for the most part, these would die a natural death with changing times. Some were too childish not to become obsolete in the light of modern innovations; not a few were too superstitious to survive the warm breath of the Revival. London and the country are now too nearly related; as regards

time, they are brought too near together by telegraphs and express trains for such provincial old-time manners not to become obsolete.

As regards the manner of observing Christmas, our forefathers had notions of their own; but in the case of the majority of people, a sense of what was right and wrong did not agree with our present-day notions. The times were coarser; the laws were harsher; human life was, as it were, cheaper; so that, as a whole, society was living on a lower plane. Amid such surroundings, persons of deep piety, of high Christian aims, were more conspicuous than such people are now. Though Whitefield never had to look far for examples to prove the notions he held concerning the degradation of human nature, the outlook was brightening; the Methodist Reformation was carrying hope into every part of the land. Wesley and his pioneer preachers were giving out their Gospel message in towns and villages alike.

Taken as a whole, the eighteenth century was a more hard and barren time for the poor than our own day. Outwardly picturesque as the villages might be, their charm did not extend to the inside of the cottages. Few among the peasants could read; and those who could do so had no literature provided for them in any considerable quantity beyond the trivial, or often pernicious, wares which itinerant chapmen offered. A wide gulf indeed separated the genteel from the lower classes. Working and uneducated people were allowed to go their own way without any

check beyond what the law provided. Those were certainly not the good old times.

Because distance lends enchantment to the view, there may seem to be a certain charm associated with the quietness of village life, as it then existed, and free as it was from much of the hurry and business pressure to which too many are now subject. Nevertheless, such daily life in those distant days was never quite what it appears to us. If it was possible for us to take a railway journey back into the middle of the eighteenth century, we should doubtless be greatly interested, provided we had return tickets; otherwise, the village or provincial town of a century ago would be little better than a prison-house. We should probably soon grow weary even of the things which now charm us most; secluded gardens and the romantic countryside would not continually satisfy when *ennui* suggested the need of change. Thus, while at all times we may becomingly show interest in the days which have gone before, let us never show ourselves to be so lacking in judgment as to suppose that those old times were comparable to our own, as regards those things which we chiefly prize as rational and accountable beings. In the early days of the ninth decade of the century, when Wesley passed from the scenes of earth to pass into the full glory of the beatific vision, he had sowed the seed in the British Isles which in our times would yield an abundant harvest. He is one of those blessed ones whose works follow, and who being dead yet speaketh.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMMON PEOPLE

THERE is much interest attached to the subject of the condition of the common people in the latter half of the eighteenth century, forty years of which represent the main part of Wesley's working life. As no census was taken, there were various guesses in regard to the actual number of the population, and we find Dr. Price quoted as saying that the number of persons in England was probably under five millions. This would be under the mark, for the census of 1801 showed the population of England to be between eight and nine millions.

In regard to the expenses of living we find that there was quite a phenomenal all-round rise during the last quarter of the century. Not only did the necessaries of life in general become very much dearer, taxation became so heavy that a very large proportion of even a small income had to be surrendered for taxes. With large numbers the times were hard; and among certain Methodists severe notions were entertained of the duty of living hard so as to have more to give away. One

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

From a painting by John Woolaston.

(Photo by Walker & Cockerell.)

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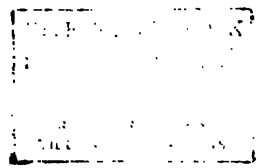


of Wesley's correspondents in 1767 remarked, that 'Methodists that do not fulfil all righteousness will have the hottest place in the lake of fire.' This man, who was also a worker, severely realised that he would have to give a full account of his stewardship. 'I have about forty-seven pounds a year,' he says. 'As to my disbursements, for apparel, I buy the most lasting, and, in general, the plainest I can. I buy no furniture but what is necessary and cheap. I make my own fire, and get my own breakfast and supper. I pay sixpence to one of our friends for my dinner. I drink herb-tea, and thereby save at least a shilling a week. I seldom drink tea in an afternoon, but sup at six on bread and cheese, with milk and water; so I save at least eightpence by dropping tea in the afternoon.' The total cost of living in this way, for a single man, was under eleven shillings a week, 'so that I have near twenty pounds to return to God in the poor.' At the same time he honestly thought that the people needed to be well looked after: 'I think the poor themselves ought to be questioned with regard to drinking tea and beer. For I cannot think it right for them to indulge themselves in those things which I refrain from to help them.' That severe want was at times widespread even among Wesley's own followers we have ample proof. In the great frost of 1740 we find that he made collections for the poor at Bristol. At another time he would remind the congregation that some of their friends 'had not needful food; many were destitute of convenient clothing; many were out

of business, and that without their own fault; and many were sick and ready to perish.' Right on into Wesley's old age, the winter custom of giving bread and coals to the poor was maintained. When he had passed his eightieth year, he walked through London to collect two hundred pounds for the poor of the Society who even wanted clothes. He even made himself ill by walking ankle-deep through melting snow. Now and then we have a momentary glimpse of the condition of the poor in days when there were few to visit or to care for them. In February 1753 we find Wesley employed in visiting such: 'I found some in their cells under ground; others in their garrets, half-starved with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain. But I found not one of them unemployed who was able to crawl about the room. So wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection, "They are poor only because they are idle."' In June 1757 he also made a collection for the poor at Newcastle, 'many of whom can very hardly support life in the present scarcity.' We find that even warm-hearted Christian people would feel the pinch of poverty to an extreme degree, being without necessary food and fire in trying winter weather. At one time a third part of the people, even in London and Westminster, wanted employment and could not obtain it; but after the accession of George III., or in the later seventies of the eighteenth century, the outlook improved. 'I did not . . . find one in ten out of business; nay, scarce one in twenty, even in Spitalfields.'

THE COMMON PEOPLE

Wesley was not only the greatest itinerant preacher who ever stood up to proclaim the Gospel in England, he may be said to have been one of those pioneers who in London and elsewhere, in the eighteenth century, anticipated the work of the Ragged School Union of a hundred years later. Any man who has the genuine ragged-school instinct never despairs of anyone; he has supreme faith that Divine grace can frustrate all the devices of the devil. The lower he found the people, the greater was Wesley's sympathy for them, and the more ardent his desire to raise them from the mire in which they were grovelling. Take the instance of 'a little village called Placey, about ten measured miles north of Newcastle,' in 1743. This was a collier village, and the inhabitants might have claimed that they had beaten the record for excess in all manner of riot and wickedness: 'Their grand assembly used to be on the Lord's Day; on which men, women, and children met together to dance, fight, curse and swear, and play at chuck, ball, span-farthing, or whatever came next to hand.' On Good Friday 1743, accompanied by a friend, he set out for Placey: 'The north wind, being unusually high, drove the sleet in our face, which froze as it fell, and cased us over presently;' and hence, 'when we came to Placey, we could very hardly stand.' Such discomforts counted for little, however; for to give the Word of life in such a place was like sowing good seed on fertile virgin soil. Both in the morning and afternoon they gathered together for the open-air service, and

listened to the Gospel message 'in spite of the wind and snow.' John Wesley lived long enough to see many transformation-scenes which represented the full rich harvest which came after such effective sowing times as this. Thus, at one time, when four large factories for spinning and weaving were put up at Epworth, in which a large number of women, boys, and girls were employed, 'the whole conversation of these was profane and loose to the last degree.' Then, through some of the number 'stumbling in at the prayer-meeting,' a change for the better set in which went on until there was complete reformation. Religion took deep root in three of the factories; and instead of there being profane or obscene talk, 'no trifling word was heard among them.' Perhaps it would hardly be possible for us to realise the uncivilised condition of the common people in those days. Thus the inhabitants of Faversham, in 1738, 'were indeed more savage in their behaviour than the wildest Indians I have yet met with.' It was observed, at that time, that on the Continent there was more decency in behaviour, though the common herd might practically be quite as bad at heart; 'so that I believe the glory of sporting with sacred things is peculiar to the English nation.'

Through being utterly neglected, children of the reign of George II. naturally grew up into men and women of this character. In Wesley's experience the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, came to be regarded as typical English savages of the more extreme kind; but in the early spring of

1743, it was found that there was a 'very Kingswood of the north'—a collier hamlet not far from Newcastle—'Twenty or thirty wild children ran around us, as soon as we came, staring as in amaze. They could not properly be said to be either clothed or naked. One of the largest (a girl about fifteen) had a piece of a ragged, dirty blanket, some way hung about her, and a kind of cap on her head, of the same cloth and colour.' Like his Divine Master, Wesley was moved with compassion when he looked upon such subjects and realised their need; and, what seems strange, he was hardly more eager to speak with them about their highest interests than they were to hear. As regarded the people of Kingswood proper, they were 'so ignorant of the things of God that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish.' When the Great Revival began its wonderful course in the early part of the reign of George II., there were wise people who thought that the Gospel would be too severely tested if offered to the colliers of Kingswood. It was preached there, however, and with the result that the place showed a reformation which was one of the most striking moral transformation-scenes of the eighteenth century. But, practically, there were other places which were quite as bad as Kingswood had been at its worst. Thus, in 1739, Newport was 'the most insensible, ill-behaved people I have ever seen in Wales.' It was plainly seen that all this was the natural outcome of popular ignorance, the people being as ignorant of the Gospel 'as any Creek or Cherikee.'

While some were willing, or even eager, to hear the good news, others were disposed to offer violent opposition, Reading being one of the towns where 'the zealous mob was so enraged, they were ready to tear the house down.' Windsor and Wednesbury also became notorious for their anti-preaching mobs; but on one occasion a mob from the former place came in collision with another mob from Burnham, each counteracting the action of the other so far as the Methodists were concerned. The royal town is found still maintaining its opposition in 1747; but hired iconoclasts are not always in earnest. In the year just named, a company of bargemen were on their way to demolish the Windsor preaching-house; but on being met and invited to attend the service, they actually did so, and threw their clubs away. To anyone who did not believe in a special providence, this would appear to be unaccountable. At times Wesley's influence over a raging mob was so wonderful as to prove to a demonstration that the Divine presence went with him. On entering Rochdale on October 18, 1749, 'we found the streets lined on both sides with multitudes of people, shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon us with their teeth.' They were soon calmed down, however; and, going on their way, the preacher and his companions 'came to Bolton about five in the evening,' to discover that 'the lions at Rochdale were as lambs in comparison' with those in this town. There was an indescribable uproar, but Wesley's usual method was at once

effective. After walking into the midst of the crowd, 'I called for a chair. The winds were hushed and all was calm and still.' In after years Wesley gave a very different picture of Bolton.

In the eighteenth century the Press-gang, as an institution for supplying men for the Royal Navy, was allowed to flourish unchecked. The custom is said to have been recognised in the Middle Ages, but, soon after it assembled, the Long Parliament declared the practice to be illegal. Wesley took this view of the matter, and, loyal as he was, did not hesitate to denounce what he regarded as cruel oppression. In July 1739 he was on one occasion preaching near Bath to some three thousand persons on 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The Revival was then just opening. 'We had a fair opportunity of showing all men what manner of spirit we were of; for in the middle of the sermon the Press-gang came, and seized on one of the hearers.' In the days of George II., when Walpole was Prime Minister, an occurrence like this would be quite a commonplace affair, but it was none the less an illegal outrage. 'Ye learned in the law,' said Wesley, 'what becomes of Magna Charta, and of English liberty and prosperity? Are not these mere sounds, while, on any pretence, there is such a thing as a press-gang suffered in the land?'

To us of this later age, who are accustomed to an easier mode of life, the preachers and their followers of the times of the Revival must appear to have been of a more hardy race. It seems that

they were not afraid of open-air preaching in all kinds of weather, and their people stood by them in a way which would not be the case to-day. One day in July, 1739, Wesley preached twice at Gloucester: in the morning he had five thousand hearers; but because 'it rained violently at five in the evening,' the congregation was reduced to three thousand, who, however, were well rewarded for patient endurance of discomfort. The weather appears even to have suggested a seasonable topic —'I expounded that glorious theme of Ezekiel of the resurrection of the dry bones.'

Preachers and hearers who could thus stand unmoved while the elements were against them, were not likely to be defeated by little things or inconveniences which arose from hardships coming from the opposition of the rabble. During a Sunday service at Charles Square, Hoxton, in the summer of 1741, an ox was brought up in hope of getting up a scene of wild disorder. The poor animal was wiser than his tormentors, however; for instead of dispersing the meeting, 'he ran round and round, one way and the other, and at length broke through the midst of them clear away, leaving us calmly rejoicing and praising God.' To procure a furious animal to serve their purpose was a favourite device of a hired rabble during Wesley's earlier experience. A few weeks after the incident just related, he was asked to conduct a service at 'a little green spot' near the town of Pensford; but hardly had he commenced when the hired rabble 'came furiously upon us,'

accompanied by a bull which was expected to do more in the way of scattering the congregation than a thousand men could have done. As in the case of the bull which had already been baited, this one was of another mind. 'He stirred no more than a log of wood.' The rabble had come down so low, that, had they been disposed to learn, the very animals might have taught them better manners. In this case the enemy so far succeeded that at length preacher and table came down together, but 'some of our friends caught me in their arms, and carried me right away on their shoulders.' A little farther afield the service was continued without interruption. This violent or vehement opposition to the Gospel was quite natural on the part of ignorant and degraded people. On this account there was nothing surprising in it; what was really astonishing was the conquest which would be made of one, and then of another, among the stoutest of the enemy's forces. At the conclusion of a service at Hemmington, in June 1741, one of Wesley's followers was actually 'a little offended' at so respectable a man being approached by 'a vile fellow, notorious all over the country for cursing, swearing, and drunkenness, though he was now grey-headed, being near fourscore years of age.' Of course such subjects were of the very kind whom Wesley desired to reach; and the aged sinner in question came forward to say that he had never heard the like in all his life, and to express the wish that the Gospel might come

home even to *his* poor soul—'He then burst into tears, so that he could speak no more.' Some of those who opposed the progress of the work came to a sorry end, and some strange things might be told concerning them. A ringleader hanged himself at Bristol in 1740.

The leaders were not often disappointed in their converts, some of whom turned out to be very remarkable characters indeed, as may be seen in the published biographies of many of the preachers. Others with whom Wesley came in contact showed many traits of character which were more or less interesting. Thus at Neath, in 1746, 'I found twelve young men whom I could almost envy. They lived together in one house, and continually gave away whatever they earned above the necessaries.' They were Calvinists, but they disliked controversy, and gladly welcomed into their midst others who differed from them in doctrine. A contrast to these was 'a lively man, who is just married in the ninety-second year of his age,' and met with at Athlone in 1752. He was a quondam military officer who had served in King William's and Queen Anne's wars, and he was still able to work in his garden during some hours every day. Then cases would be visited in which the consolations of religion under the most trying circumstances were powerfully manifested. Thus, in September 1740, 'I visited a poor woman, who, lying ill between her two sick children, without either physic, or food convenient for her, was mightily praising God her Saviour, and

testifying, as often as she could speak, her desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.' While constantly coming in contact with the sick and the suffering, Wesley appears in a sense to have believed in faith-healing, and, as he himself thought, he practised it. On one occasion, when preaching near Bristol, this note was handed up to him: 'A person whom God has visited with a fever, and has wonderfully preserved seven days in a hay-mow, without any sustenance but a little water out of a ditch, desires to return God thanks.' This person committed himself to the Lord's care, either to live or die, fell asleep and awoke refreshed and cured. Another is mentioned who was 'in grievous pain both of body and mind.' Prayer was offered for her, and then her friends went away—'But her pain was gone; her soul being in full peace, and her body also so strengthened that she immediately rose, and the next day went abroad.' Such patients were more to be envied than some others who got into the hands of ignorant empirics, such as too often practised as surgeons in those days. There was one youth who, being under conviction of sin, was treated for insanity, his very life being almost 'blooded' and blistered out of him. Being as 'mad' as he had been before, and scarce able to stand on account of the weakness to which his physicians had reduced him, there was hope for him at once when the services of such medical advisers were dispensed with. Far more perilous than disease were the ordinary run of doctors in the eighteenth century.

We find that in the days of George II. the British army was generally in a low state of moral degradation, while at times when on active service, as prisoners of war, the men would lack the common necessaries of life. It is well known that among the common rank and file who served in the Continental wars, there were Methodists whose piety won for them a fame which survives to this day; and to whom Wesley frequently alludes. On the other hand, we see what ordinary soldiers were like in connection with a visit which Wesley paid to Newport in the Isle of Wight in October 1758: 'The neighbouring camp had filled the town with soldiers, the most abandoned wretches whom I ever saw. Their whole glorying was in cursing, swearing, drunkenness and lewdness.' Such characters seem even to show an unfavourable contrast to the French prisoners of war who were then in the country. When in Cornwall, Wesley would have French prisoners in his congregation. At other times, he would make collections among his own people in order to supply their pressing needs, especially in the way of clothes. In September 1757 a number of men who had been prisoners of war in France were landed. Some of these, while on their homeward way, passed through Redruth 'in a most forlorn condition.' The French prisoners appear to have been moved with compassion by a sight of the misery of those whom they might have regarded as belonging to 'the enemy.' The French 'gave them food, clothes, or money, and told them,

"We wish we could do more; but we have little for ourselves here." Some who had only two shirts gave a naked Englishman one. A French boy, meeting an English boy who was half-naked, took hold of him, and stopped him, cried over him a while, and then pulled off his own coat and put it upon him.'

There are good as well as unfavourable reports of the army and of the militia; and, as might be expected, the men differed in character, being greatly influenced by the conduct of their officers. In July 1758 Wesley preached in the market-place at Richmond, in Yorkshire: 'The Yorkshire Militia were all there, just returned from their exercise; and a more rude rabble-rout I never saw; without sense, decency, or good manners.' On the other hand, the Durham Militia presented a grateful contrast to all this; for when, just afterwards, Wesley was at Barnard-Castle, the commanding officer ordered that exercise should be suspended so that the men might attend the service 'Accordingly, we had a little army of officers as well as soldiers; and all behaved well. A large number of them were present at five in the morning. I have not found so deep and lively a work in any other part of the kingdom as runs through the whole Circuit, particularly in the vales that wind between these horrid mountains.' The allusion to the hills may remind us that wild and picturesque scenery was not taken so much account of in the eighteenth century as is the case to-day. Both Johnson and Boswell preferred the outlook

of Fleet Street to a Highland landscape; and there was another trustworthy representative of prevailing taste who preferred the fumes of flambeaux outside a theatre to the aroma of a June hayfield!

According to one well-known writer and observer of human nature, the eighteenth century was the comfortable time for enjoying everyday life in all of its varied phases. There were fewer people; there was less hurry; and for those who liked rural seclusion, the facilities for enjoying it were many and complete. During one of his 'little journeys' undertaken in the autumn of 1766, Wesley was led to think 'on the huge encomiums which have been for many ages bestowed on a *country life*'; and he came to the conclusion that actual experience contradicted the prevailing notion: 'See that little house, under the wood by the river-side! There is rural life in perfection. How happy then is the farmer that lives there!' What contributed to his felicity is then mentioned in detail—rising with the sun, looking after pigs and cows, ploughmen, sowers and haymakers, at different seasons, and dining on 'beans well greased with fat bacon; nay, and cabbage too!' The conclusion arrived at was that country farmers did not enjoy their imaginary privileges. 'In general, their life is supremely dull; and it is usually unhappy too. For of all people in the kingdom, they are most discontented; seldom satisfied either with God or man.' Nevertheless, genius of a surprising kind would occasionally appear in the farmhouse. A farmer's daughter

named Whateley wrote good poems, and with proper advantages Wesley thought she might have become chief of English female poets. He thought that, in general, gentlemen's servants of the time were even more unpromising than the farmers. Thus, after preaching at Wycombe in August 1767, 'I saw but three or four that seemed unaffected; and those, I suppose, were footmen; a race of men who are commonly lost to all sense of shame as well as of good and evil.'

Wesley had a keen eye for detecting anything which seemed to be uncommon either in nature or in human life. At Birmingham, in 1768, he had an auditor who was born soon after the Restoration, being one hundred and six years old. 'He can still walk to the preaching, and retains his senses and understanding.' Contrast this with what the veteran preacher once witnessed at Oldham, the main street being 'lined with little children; and such children as I never saw till now.' They were even demonstrative in their affection; they 'ran round me and before me;' and finally 'a whole troop, boys and girls, closed me in, and would not be content till I shook each of them by the hand.' In the great evangelist's later age, the very old and the very young rivalled one another in showing their affection for such a friend.

In connection with Trevecca in 1767, where the Countess of Huntingdon's College — afterwards removed to Cheshunt—was soon afterwards founded, we have this affecting account of how a poor servant-maid spent the last day of her life on

earth: As dairy-maid, she 'was beloved by all the family. She was loving to everyone, never angry, never out of humour. That morning she was much happier, and had a fuller manifestation of the love of God than ever. As she was coming through the entry, a lad met her with a gun in his hand, which he did not know was charged. He presented it and said, "Nanny, I will shoot you." The gun went off and shot her through the heart. She fell on her face, and without any struggle or groan immediately expired.'

In the early days of the Revival there were those who would have had people to believe that Wesley was little, if anything, better than an agent of the Jesuits. It appears that, when conducting their open-air services in Moorfields, the preachers would be assailed with cries of 'Popery! Popery!' There was good reason for raising such an outcry if the opponents of Romanism had only gone to the right place to select the actual offenders. In 1741 there was a Romish preacher who conducted services three times a week at the West End of London, and succeeded in making many proselytes. Why did not the anti-Romanists go thither? 'Plainly, because they have no mind to fight at all; but to show their valour without an opponent. And they well know they may defy Popery at the Foundery without any danger of contradiction.' As the Revival proceeded and showed more and more of an all-round success, the fanatics, of whom Mr. Worldly-Wiseman might have been accounted the apostle, showed that violent opposition could be

more or less varied. Thus at Hornby, in 1757, 'the zealous landlord turned all the Methodists out of their houses.' But even this drastic action proved quite ineffective; 'for they built some little houses at the end of the town, in which forty or fifty of them live together.' Probably London did not so greatly distinguish itself in the way of hostility to the Gospel as certain of the provincial towns to which allusion has been made. At Long Lane, in 1742, however, the enemy showed his teeth in a very unmistakable manner. 'They not only made all possible noise, but violently thrust many persons to and fro, struck others, and broke down part of the house.' When they became still more violent with stones, Wesley ordered the arrest of a ringleader, and the man had to appear at the Sessions. The most wonderful outcome of such a riot was when certain of the leaders were stricken to the heart to become converts. In this instance a man and a woman, who had been degraded characters of the most terrible kind, were gathered into the Christian Church.

As time went on, Wesley thought that it was his duty to assist poor members of the Society by loans of money, as well as by small gifts in the way of relief. This led to a first collection being made in 1746 'towards a lending stock for the poor.' No more than £1 was lent at once, and this modest capital had to be repaid in instalments of about eighteenpence a week. Nothing more emphatically testifies to the hard lot of a

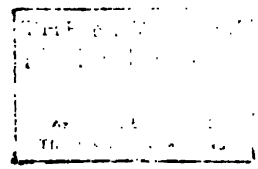
main part of the people than the record of this Fund in the days of George II. Starting with a capital of £30, 16s., as many as two hundred and fifteen persons received loans in the course of about a year and a half. Certain of the humble borrowers rose to good positions as tradespeople, and such would nowadays strike one as being remarkable examples of thrift, honesty, and perseverance. We need not wonder that the enterprise was heartily encouraged by persons outside of the Methodist Society—'Dr. W., hearing of this design, sent a guinea towards it; as did an eminent Deist the next morning.'

The truth is, that the poverty to which many Christian people were reduced was very severe, for what might have been seen 'in Bethnal Green hamlet' in 1777 very closely corresponded with what might be witnessed there to-day. 'Many of them I found in such poverty as few can conceive without seeing it,' remarks Wesley. On the next day he went on a round elsewhere, when the cases of want which he met with were still more distressing, and exceeded what had been witnessed even 'in the prison of Newgate.' In one room a man 'was just creeping out of his sick-bed to his ragged wife and three little children; who were more than half naked, and the very picture of famine, when one bringing in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it in pieces in an instant.'

As the Wesleyan Methodist Society made very considerable progress in Cornwall, reference to the Wreckers, who still flourished there in Wesley's time,

must not be omitted. If one wanted to depict the most savage degradation into which human nature has ever sunk, we should need only to borrow from the annals of these Wreckers who have infested our own and the coast of other countries. Of course this diabolical practice, as well as that of bringing in 'uncustomed goods' by smugglers, was severely proscribed. Individuals or communities had to set their faces against these practices or they were not eligible for membership in the Methodist Societies. The practice itself continued until comparatively recent times however; so that when Wesley, in 1776, made inquiries concerning Wreckers and wrecking in Cornwall, he learned that the practice prevailed 'as much as ever; only the Methodists will have nothing to do with it.' During the preceding spring a vessel had been wrecked there, when 'the tinners presently seized on all the goods; and even broke in pieces a new coach which was on board and carried every scrap of it away.' It was held that such outrages were preventable; and that if the laws 'were strictly executed upon the next plunderers,' such an example would ensure that the next wreck would be left unmolested. There was even a milder prescription which would certainly cure the disease: Let employers 'only agree together to discharge any tinner or labourer that is concerned in the plundering of a wreck, and advertise his name.' In that case, 'neither tinner nor labourer will any more be concerned in that bad work.'

From the examples given, it should not be inferred that the common people were actually any worse in a moral and religious sense than those above them. It becomes sufficiently clear that the poor were in great measure what those in higher social station made them. In numbers of instances the mob was actually hired to frustrate the efforts of those who sought to raise them from the most terrible degradation. There were magistrates who sought to evade the law, and juries who would not convict. There were also many clergymen who not only refused to advance the cause of the Revival, but who encouraged the lower orders in those outrages which were no more allowed by the law of the land than they were by the Christian religion. The truth is, that the case of the common people in the eighteenth century was similar to what it is to-day—those who made up the crowd were in the main what their surroundings made them. Scholars may be better than their schoolmasters, but it is not often found to be the case.



1. JAMES HAMILTON, M.D.

2. REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 3. REV. JOSEPH COLE.

As seen walking in Edinburgh, 1790.

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CHAPTER VII

THE UPPER CLASSES

ALTHOUGH he was a scholar and a gentleman, Wesley was, more than anything else, an apostle to the common people; he seemed to be more in his element when giving his message to the vulgar crowd than when mixing with great and famous personages into whose company he was occasionally thrown. This was simply because his one aim was to get his message accepted, and the lower orders were found to be much more accessible than the upper. His education and good breeding enabled him to maintain an easy manner in any aristocratic society; but a great gulf separated that world from the one which made up Wesley's constituency. When the Methodist Revival commenced, things had come to such a pass in the Established Church, that it was rather fashionable than otherwise not to be a believer in Christianity. There seem to have been certain clergymen who in private even boasted of their infidelity.

Practically, Puritanism went out of fashion at the Revolution of 1688; and although in the age

that followed, Matthew Henry, 'chief among the mighty,' and 'the greatest of commentators,' as he has been called, composed his immortal work, the time was one of religious deterioration. Although the early years of the reign of George II., when the Methodist Revival first broke out, are said to have been the most prosperous time that the nation had ever known.

Because the King still represented the Protestant Succession, which was destined to be once more challenged by the rising under the Young Pretender, on behalf of his father, 'James III.,' he was popular with all who were not Jacobites or Romanists. Wesley was Protestant patriot enough even to admire the 'flighty vapouring little king'; and he was not in a situation to know what Carlyle knew to be the truth, a century later, in regard to Queen Caroline—'Seldom had foolish husband so wise a wife.' George was a man of his time, a German at a time when that meant full licence to a monarch for the most shameless living. If we take such men as Sir Robert Walpole, Chesterfield, and Lord Hervey, as representative of what is called high society, what do we find? The first, as a statesman, served the country with advantage because his policy was for peace; but he was as profligate in private life as he was unprincipled in a political sense. Chesterfield, who came to a miserable old age, wrote a book of advice to his son, which from that day to this has been a curse to all young men who have accepted its teaching. The deistical and effeminate Hervey — Pope's,

'Lord Fanny'—belonged to a family whose members appear to have cut short their lives by excess. He married Mary Lepell, the chief of three beauties who added attraction to the Court of George I. Hervey succeeded his elder brother—whose life was cut short by profligacy, and who was said by Lady Mary Montagu to be the father of Horace Walpole; but he himself showed the symptoms of old age and died at forty-seven. He painted his face to conceal its deadly ghastliness, according to one report; and at last sought to prolong life by a diet of asses' milk and one apple a week. Yet he could engage in the most bitter literary quarrels; while he fought a duel with Pulteney, the chief of the political party who plotted for the overthrow of Walpole. What was Methodism to such adventurers as these but a craze to be ignored rather than tolerated? Lord Hervey, the jovial, loose-living and foul-mouthed Sir Robert Walpole, as well as the polished cynic, Horace Walpole, were men of their time, whose lives and sympathies seemed to reflect bad times and a degenerate world.

In following Wesley through his extraordinary career, he is found to have been more than anything else a preacher to the common people; but while he may not have felt himself to be at home as it were among those who thronged the haunts of fashion, he still realised that his mission was to all classes. One of his most singular adventures at the outset of the Methodist Revival, was coming in contact with Beau Nash, who was then Master

of the Ceremonies at Bath, that town then being a great centre of fashionable frivolity.

Bath had become popular as a health resort after the memorable visit of Queen Anne at the beginning of her reign; and also because several physicians referred to the efficacy of the waters in certain disorders. Until this time, gambling and its attendant evils had chiefly been confined to London; but when Bath grew in favour, the fashionable crowd craved for the amusements which they had left behind in the Metropolis; so that when Nash, with his genius for organising, had brought some order out of chaos, they found all the accommodation which they required. In his Life of Beau Nash, Oliver Goldsmith thus describes what the city of Bath was like just two hundred years ago:—

'The lodgings for visitors were paltry though expensive; the dining-rooms and other chambers were floored with boards, coloured brown with soot and small-beer to hide the dirt; the walls were covered with unpainted wainscot; the furniture corresponded with the meanness of the architecture; a few oak chairs, a small looking-glass, with a fender and tongs, composed the magnificence of these temporary habitations. The city was in itself mean and contemptible; no elegant buildings, no open streets nor uniform squares. The pump-house was without any director; the chairmen permitted no gentlemen or ladies to walk home by night without insulting them; and to add to all this, one of the greatest physicians of his age con-

ceived a design of ruining the city by writing against the efficacy of the waters.'

An acquaintance with Bath and its daily round of dissipation in those times seems indispensable to aid us in understanding the period. By general consent Beau Nash was allowed to reign as Master of the Ceremonies; and having some genius for organisation, he pleased the frivolous votaries of fashion who there sought to diversify the cares or monotony of daily life. The city swarmed with gaming adventurers, and until late in the reign of George I. the licence allowed by the law favoured their fleecing their victims almost at will. The arch-gamester was Beau Nash himself, who depended on such nefarious gains to maintain a pseudo-state little short of ludicrous. As Goldsmith tells us, 'his equipage was sumptuous, and he usually travelled to Tunbridge in a post-chariot and six greys, with outriders, footmen, French-horns, and every other appendage of expensive parade.' Bath and Tunbridge were such centres of gaming that, as Goldsmith also tells us, 'men of that infamous profession from every part of the kingdom, and even other parts of Europe, flocked here to feed on the ruins of each other's fortune.'

Beau Nash showed that he was possessed of a far more generous heart than many of the unprincipled adventurers who were content to grow rich at any hazard, and without troubling themselves about the misery they caused to others. He warned the young and inexperienced of lurking dangers, and desperate players of the ruin which

was certainly close on their heels unless they checked their infatuation. To spare a friend, he would even forego an advantage which was within his grasp.

At the same time both Nash and the fashionable throng who professed to acknowledge his authority, knew well that when their action and principles were contrasted with the teaching of Wesley, they stood condemned before the world, and even by conscience, if that was not already seared as with a hot iron. In June 1739 the Revival was beginning to get a firm hold of the country, but already Wesley may have fully realised that the service in which he had embarked was to be attended with some danger. On the fourth of the month, at Bristol, 'many came to me and earnestly advised me not to preach abroad in the afternoon,' he says, 'because there was a combination of several persons who threatened terrible things.' Such a threat did not intimidate Wesley; on the contrary, he could not have obtained a more effective advertisement. There was an addition to the congregation of a thousand, and mainly consisting of 'the better sort of people, so-called.'

Quite naturally, the contagion spread; and as Wesley was expected in the city to preach in the open air, 'there was great expectation at Bath of what a noted man was to do.' This was Beau Nash, who, as everyone knows who has read Wesley's Diary, duly appeared on the scene, and objected to the service as being illegal, and to the preaching as talk which frightened people 'out of their wits.'

Nash showed far better manners than many of the squires and clergy whom Wesley was destined to meet with, for he would never have descended to violence. As it was, he was no match for Wesley; and when one called out, 'Sir, leave him to me; let an old woman answer him,' the so-called King of Bath 'replied not a word, but walked away.'

Among the highborn women who lived and worked to give both character and prestige to Methodism in its early days, we have to include Mary Bosanquet, who eventually, after she was turned of forty, became the wife of Fletcher of Madeley. Born in 1739, just after the outbreak of the Revival, Mary appears to have been converted in childhood, but quite contrary to the wishes of her parents, who were too wealthy, as well as too completely captivated with the luxury and gaiety of fashionable life, to allow of their wishing to come into contact with the Methodists. Her parents probably took her to Bath before death compelled Beau Nash to surrender his rule; but the heavenly fire which had been kindled in her heart could not be extinguished. We all know how, as a child, Lord Shaftesbury owed the kindling of his religious life to the instrumentality of a Christian servant in the ancestral home; and we find that a Methodist domestic, who did not hide her light under a bushel, found her way into the household of the Bosanquets. Having a small fortune in her own right, Mary Bosanquet founded an orphanage at Leytonstone, her native place, which was afterwards removed to Yorkshire. Her work and character were

evidently a refreshment to Wesley whenever he thought of them. In some directions Mary Bosanquet may have favoured innovations which many would not altogether sanction; such, for example, as that of women preaching or exhorting in the church; but if good was actually done who would undertake to affirm that the practice was not owned of God? It is still true, 'By their fruits ye shall know them;' and when, as in this case, we have a woman who in one year has been known to spend less than a sovereign on dress, and not far short of £200 on the poor, we can judge of her mettle.

One of the last letters Wesley ever wrote had reference to this matter of women preaching. Miss A. Cambridge, of Bandon, in Ireland, was one who rivalled the men Methodist preachers in earnestness, but her addresses were spoken of as being irregular, and she appealed to Wesley himself for a decision. 'I would have you give as little offence as possible,' was the reply; 'and therefore I would advise you not to speak where a preacher is speaking at the same time, lest you should draw away his hearers. Also, avoid the first appearance of pride or magnifying yourself.' If books were needed, Miss Cambridge was to make known her wants, for her adviser had her happiness 'much at heart'; and he asked Miss Cambridge to pray for him during the short time he would remain on earth. Hardly more than a month from this time and Wesley was in the Promised Land.

Some years after the adventure with Beau Nash

at Bath, Wesley was once more preaching in the gay city, when 'some of the rich and great were present,' on which account it seemed to be the more necessary to the evangelist to use 'all plainness of speech.' Knowing so well what human nature is, we can quite understand how offensive it would appear to have the vulgar unwashed crowd placed on an equality with educated people proud of their superfine ways. On this occasion it was shown 'that all men were by nature children of wrath, that their natural tempers were corrupt, and that a natural man had no more faith than a devil.' At this stage Lord ——, who until then had 'stayed very patiently,' rose hastily and walked away, remarking, ''Tis hot! 'Tis very hot!' Others stayed longer, however, and desired to hear more. 'One of them, a noted infidel, hung over the next seat in an attitude not to be described; and when he went, left half a guinea with Mary Naylor for the use of the poor.' Thus the pressing need was the same among all classes; and the Gospel asserted its power with the rich as well as with the poor. Perhaps, however, the mere perversity of human nature was occasionally more manifest among the rich when a parent would actually dread the conversion of a child, regarding that as a calamity which would be contrary to fashion! The father of Mary Bosanquet was of this mind; and, before her marriage, he once pleaded with his daughter, almost in a pathetic manner, not to make any effort to make either of her brothers what she called a Christian! The

following adventure, which befell Wesley about ten days after the scene at Bath already mentioned, very faithfully reflects the condition and sentiments of the upper classes in the middle of the reign of George II.:—

'I met a gentleman in the streets, cursing and swearing in so dreadful a manner that I could not but stop him. He soon grew calmer; told me he must treat me with a glass of wine; and that he would come and hear me, only he was afraid I should say something against fighting of cocks!'

A few weeks later Wesley was attracted to Cowbridge, and the people in general appeared to be as anxious to hear as he was to preach. So much had already been said against the Methodists, that not a few of the impartial inhabitants were anxious to know the rights of the case. This was not to be, however; for 'one or two wretches called gentlemen' were not willing that there should be anything like an impartial judgment. They 'continued shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and throwing showers of stones almost without intermission,' until the congregation had to be dismissed.

The opposition encountered in Cornwall during the memorable summer of 1745, when people were excited about the invasion of the Young Pretender, was also fomented by the county gentry. In such a case they were obliged, as they thought, to charge the preachers with such an offence as would convince the vulgar that the opposition was reasonable, and was in the interest of the public

safety. Hence it was seriously reported that Wesley's main object was to advance the cause of the Pretender! What did it all mean when a company of men on horseback representing those in authority, and even the Justices sitting at Helstone, were in readiness to arrest the chief offender? Wesley boldly confronted them; and then, after some talk, one of the gentlemen rode some distance, and ventured to offer an explanation: 'Sir, I will tell you the ground of this. All the gentlemen of these parts say that you have been a long time in France and Spain, and are now sent hither by the Pretender; and that these Societies are to join him!' What could a loyal evangelist say to such a charge as that? A false charge never disturbed Wesley; and on this occasion he retired into a friend's house to find that 'the sleep of a labouring man is sweet.' His reply to the friend who had volunteered the information, however, was characteristic: 'Nay, surely, "all the gentlemen in these parts" will not be against their own consciences.'

The fifth decade of the eighteenth century was a terrible time for excessive drinking. This example of a genteel victim in London belongs to the year 1747:—

'I called upon poor Mr. C., who once largely tasted of the good word and the powers of the world to come. I found him very loving, and very drunk; as he commonly is, day and night. But I could fix nothing upon him. "He may fall foully, but not finally."'

Liberal as they were with their representations of what were the alleged follies of Methodism, the educated opponents of the preachers were generally discomfited when a few unwelcome revelations were made about their own history. We have seen how readily an ancient dame could at once put Beau Nash *hors de combat* by her timely remarks; and similar instances would occur. At Grimsby, early in 1747, 'a very large audience' was annoyed by 'a young gentleman and his companions,' until 'a poor woman' related 'a few passages of his life,' and so turned the laugh upon him until there was nothing to be done but to hasten away. Although the Gospel really made its conquests among such people, they were somewhat few and far between, and were regarded as marvels. Thus, referring to Redruth in the summer of 1747, Wesley remarks: 'There are now scarce any in the town but gentlemen who are not convinced of the truth.' What strikes a modern observer as being singular, is a certain contrast which Wesley draws between the English and the Irish people, and one which shows the latter to advantage. Of a service in the neighbourhood of Tyrrel's Pass in 1748 we are told: 'Many of the neighbouring gentlemen were present, but none mocked. That is not the custom here,' it is added; 'all attend to what is spoken in the name of God; they do not understand the making sport with sacred things; so that whether they approve or no, they behave with seriousness.'

The early Methodists believed in the judgments

of God; Wesley did so perhaps more ardently than the majority of his followers. Just before Christmas 1748, when Old Christmas-Day had not been superseded by the New Style, something happened at Wandsworth which would tend to confirm the prevalent belief. The rabble in that southern suburb had such strong objections to Methodist preaching, that they threw dirt and stones at those who engaged in the practice, 'abusing both men and woman in the grossest manner.' When complaint was made to a resident magistrate, it seemed as though the right thing would be done. It so happened, however, that 'Mr. C. walked over to his house, and spoke so much in favour of the rioters that they were all discharged.' This was only one example of how a man, whose duty it was to enforce the law and keep the peace, could still be brought round 'to encourage a merciless rabble in outraging the innocent.' In this instance the affair was not destined to end at this stage, however; for 'a few days after, Mr. C., walking over the same field, dropped down and spoke no more!' Probably there was not a Methodist in the land, who had been subjected to the assaults of the enemy, but what would have put down such an occurrence as this to the finger of God.

In the course of his life and travels, probably Wesley was entertained in a greater number of fine houses than any other itinerant preacher who ever lived. His remarks about them are always to the purpose, and his general sentiments regarding

them closely correspond with those which John Foster would have expressed under similar circumstances—

> 'Must I leave thee, Paradise? Then leave
> These happy shades, and mansions fit for gods?'

Although there was little of suburban villadom, as we are familiar with it, in the eighteenth century, the country-houses of well-to-do people were then sufficiently attractive to make their possessors content with earth, and to be content not to leave it. The master of such an establishment would seem to have had more leisure to perfect everything than is possible in these more fast-moving times. In the summer of 1759 Wesley 'dined at Mr. B.'s in Epsom, whose house and gardens lie in what was once a chalk-pit.' He adds, 'It is the most elegant spot I ever saw with my eyes; everything, within doors and without, being finished in the most exquisite taste.'

A paradise on a larger scale was Hagley Park, then supposed to be 'inferior to few, if any, in England'; but to take a proper view of its attractions needed half a day, and such sight-seeing was never allowed to interfere with engagements. After all, Wesley's chief surprise came when he visited Shenstone's wonderful little domain of the Leasowes, at Hales Owen, Worcestershire, some years after the poet's death—Horace Walpole's 'Water-gruel-bard.' We have to remember that people came from far and near to see Shenstone's extraordinary achievements in landscape gardening;

and what he did in this department is said to have brought him more fame than his poems. The drawback was that the fortune lavished on the gardening impoverished the gardener, who, meanwhile, was 'living in hopes of great preferment grounded on the hopes of many rich and great friends. But nothing was performed, till he died at forty-eight; probably of a broken heart!' This is what Wesley says in reference to his visit to the Leasowes:—

'I never was so surprised. I have seen nothing in all England to be compared with it. It is beautiful and elegant all over. There is nothing grand, nothing costly; no temples, so-called; no statues (except two or three, which had better have been spared); but such walks, such shades, such hills and dales, such lawns, such artless cascades, such waving woods, with water intermixed, as exceed all imagination! On the upper side from the openings of a shady walk is a most beautiful and extensive prospect. And all this is comprised in the compass of three miles! I doubt if it be exceeded by anything in Europe.'

One more noble owner of a beautiful garden may be mentioned, Wesley's friend Lady Arabella Denny, whose residence was at Lisaniskea, four miles out of Dublin. Lady Denny was a philanthropist before the age of philanthropy; and the kindness she extended to foundling children prompted the authorities of Dublin to bestow upon her the freedom of the City. By founding the Magdalene Asylum in the Irish capital, she

was also the first in Ireland to engage in that department of service. Her ladyship was about four years younger than Wesley, who, after looking over the grounds at Lisaniskea in the spring of 1783, remarked: 'It cannot be long before this excellent lady will remove to a nobler paradise.' Although Lady Denny outlived her friend, one entered into rest within a few months of the passing away of the other. Wesley thought the house and grounds to be one of the pleasantest spots in the Emerald Isle. 'The garden is everything in miniature. On one side is a grove, with serpentine walks; on the other a little meadow and a greenhouse, with a study (which she calls her chapel) hanging over the sea. Between there is a broad walk, leading down almost to the edge of the water; along which runs two narrow walks, commanding the quays, one above the other.'

In the Annual Register for 1760 there is an account of a meeting of the Governors of the Dublin Workhouse, at which the Earl of Lanesborough presided, when a vote of thanks was accorded to Lady Arabella Denny 'for the continuance of her kind and most useful attention to the foundling children.' Grateful acknowledgment had also to be made 'particularly for a clock lately put up in the nursery at her ladyship's expense.' This clock was of an uncommon kind, and it bore this inscription:—

'For the benefit of infants protected by this hospital, Lady Arabella Denny presents this clock, to mark, that as children reared by the spoon must

have but a small quantity of food at a time, it must be offered frequently; for which purpose this clock strikes every twenty minutes, at which notice all the infants that are not asleep must be discreetly fed.'

Wesley had a keen eye for oddities, and a curiosity in the way of horticulture which attracted some attention in 1782 must not be overlooked:—

'I saw such a garden at Oxford as I believe all England cannot parallel. It is three-square; and, I conjecture, contains about an acre of ground. It is filled with fruit-trees of various sorts, and all excellent in their kinds. But it is odd beyond all description; superlatively whimsical. The owner has crowded together pictures, statues, urns, antiques of various kinds. For all which why should not Mr. Badcock's name . . . be consigned to posterity?'

That might be the home of peace and happiness, the retreat of one who found consolation in eccentricity. Apart from such instances, the contrasts of despair and misery, even among those who occupied high social positions, were as manifest in the eighteenth century as they are to-day. After preaching at Wincanton, in December 1765, Wesley made this note: 'Riding homeward, we saw the pond in which a great man, a few weeks since, put an end to a wretched life. And is death more welcome than life, even to a man that wallows in gold and silver?'

Then, some time afterwards, an extraordinary love-tragedy occurred in connection with the household of the Perronets at Shoreham.

Miss B., who seems to have been a niece of Miss Perronet, was engaged to be married to a Mr. H. He had been intimately acquainted with her for some years. 'By immense assiduity, and innumerable professions of the tenderest affection, he, by slow degrees gained hers. The time of marriage was fixed; the ring was bought; the wedding clothes were sent to her.' He called more than once shortly before the wedding-day, and showed his affection to be as ardent as ever. Finally, almost on the eve of the day fixed for the wedding, he called again, 'sat down very carelessly on a chair, and told her with great composure that he did not love her at all, and therefore could not think of marrying her.' He talked in this strain for some time, and then walked off. In less than a week after this interview, 'one of the ventricles of her heart burst; so she literally died of a broken heart.' If such an adventure had been introduced into fiction would not the author have been accused of unnaturalness or exaggeration?

One noble penitent, who became a widow before she was out of her teens, soon after the accession of George III., and joined the Methodist Society, was Lady Maxwell. She founded a school for poor children at Edinburgh, and provided an endowment, so that after her death, in 1810, the work could still be carried on. Wesley wrote some charming and characteristic letters to this noble convert, who remained steadfast for over forty years, *e.g.*:—

'There is no danger of your tiring me. I do not

often write so long letters as this, but when I write to you, I am full of matter. I seem to see you just before me,—a poor, feeble, helpless creature, just upon the point of salvation; upright of heart (in a measure), full of real desires for God, and emerging into light.'

Early in June 1767 Lady Maxwell was unwell, and Wesley wrote to her from Ireland:—

'My belief is that a journey to England might be of great service to your health; and it is not improbable you might receive much benefit from the water of the hot wells near Bristol. In August I hope to be at Bristol; and again in the latter end of September. My chaise and horses are at Bristol, which you would oblige me much if you would please to use as your own during your stay there; for you should, if possible, ride out daily. My wife, who is at Newcastle, will be exceeding glad to wait upon you there; and, if you choose to rest a few days, I should be glad if you would make use of the Orphan House. You would be pleased with the Miss Dales, and they with you. You and they have drank into one Spirit. Miss Peggy is one of the holiest young women that I have any knowledge of. You will be so kind as to let me know when you expect to be at Newcastle, and possibly I may meet you there.'

Some years after Wesley had found a steadfast friend in Lady Maxwell, he became acquainted with Lady Wilhelmina Glenorchy. Although each of these high-born ladies belonged to a school of theology different from the other, they were bound

together in bonds of closest personal sympathy. There can be no doubt that from the first Lady Glenorchy, of whom a biography was published, looked at Wesley through the spectacles of Calvinistic prejudice; and the wonder is that she should have appointed a Methodist like Lady Maxwell to act as her executor, as well as manager of her chapels both in England and Scotland. Dr. Webster of the Tolbooth Church and Wesley met at Lady Glenorchy's house, and after talking about 'God's decrees, predestination, and the saints' perseverance,' her ladyship followed the Scottish divine. 'Nevertheless, I hope Mr. Wesley is a child of God,' she wrote. 'He has been an instrument of saving souls; as such I honour him, and will countenance his preachers. I have heard him preach thrice; and should have been better pleased had he preached more of Christ and less of himself.' The favour extended to the Methodist preachers was of brief duration. At Midsummer 1771 she had dismissed the preachers, partly because she disagreed with their teaching; but mainly because the Scottish 'Gospel preachers' would not appear in a pulpit the use of which was allowed to the Arminians!

We are not to suppose that Wesley was particularly pleased when the members of the Society 'increased in goods' in a degree that was likely to stimulate their love of the world. As was to be expected, many grew rich, and, as was also inevitable, some of those striking turns of fortune also occurred which shows that real life has

oftentimes more of romance in it than fiction. In a concise paragraph Wesley tells us of something which happened in 1783, which forcibly illustrates this fact:—

'I buried the remains of Captain Cheesement, one who, some years since, from a plentiful fortune, was by a train of losses utterly ruined; but two or three friends enabling him to begin trade again, the tide turned; he prospered greatly, and riches flowed in on every side. A few years ago he married one equally agreeable in her person and temper. So what had he to do but enjoy himself? Accordingly, he left off business, took a large handsome house, and furnished it in a most elegant manner. A little while after, showing his rooms to a friend, he said, "All this will give small comfort in a dying hour." A few days after, he was taken with a fever. I saw him twice. He was sensible, but could not speak. In spite of all means, he grew worse and worse, and in about twelve days died. So within a few days we lost two of our richest, and two of our holiest, members,—Sarah Clay, and good old George Hufflet, who had been for many years a burning and a shining light. He lay fourteen weeks praising God continually, and had then a triumphant entrance into His Kingdom.'

At Bridlington, a short time afterwards, a curious case came to light of a wealthy lady, who had lived as a gay butterfly of fashion, suddenly changing into a Pharisaic precisian. 'She ran from east to west,' it is said, or, as we should say,

from west to east; 'she parted with all her clothes, dressed like a servant, and scarce allowed herself the necessaries of life.' All the while, nobody could persuade her that she was 'going too far.' It was needful that God should teach her that obvious truth. Such a case as this was of course not so distressing as some of those reverses of fortune which from time to time came under Wesley's notice. As the law was in the eighteenth century, imprisonment for debt meant a good deal more of hardship than one might be disposed to think. Thus, in one instance, Wesley found 'a gentlewoman who used to keep her coach, shut up with her four children in a dark dirty room, without almost any of the necessaries of life.' That was a sample case of women's sufferings when their husbands were imprisoned for debt.

While Wesley thus had a good deal of genial intercourse with the upper classes, the outlook, as a whole, was more forbidding than is the case to-day. Irreligion or indifference is no doubt painfully common in high life at the present time; but generally we do not find the excess and degradation which were too characteristic of aristocratic life a century and a half ago. When he was eighty-five years old, Wesley was surprised to hear 'that it is now the custom, in all *good* company, to give obscene healths, even though clergymen be present; one of whom, lately refusing to drink such a health, was put out of the room; and one of the forwardest, in this *worthy* company, was a bishop's steward.' It was no wonder that at

times Wesley was disposed to become sarcastic, and realised, perhaps with some bitterness, that while his message reached the poor, he too often missed the so-called great and noble. Preaching in Salop in March 1790, he was 'much ashamed' of his audience,—'The moment I had done speaking, I suppose fifty of them were talking all at once; and no wonder, they had neither sense nor good manners; for they were all gentlefolks.' At times, however, there came a pleasant surprise, when genteel people showed the good qualities of peasants, an instance having occurred at Bath in 1789. Says Wesley, 'Here we have the rich and honourable in abundance; and yet abundance of them came even in a stormy night, and seemed as attentive as colliers!' The reforming influences of Methodism had evidently began to reach what Spurgeon once called 'the scum at the top.'

The brothers Wesley were among those who were afflicted by the tragedy in which Lawrence Earl Ferrers was the chief actor, when in a fury of passion, to which he was subject, he murdered Johnson his land-steward in January 1760. The Earl was the last nobleman in England to die the death of a felon. On May 5, when the execution took place at Tyburn, Wesley was preaching at Belfast; and while in Ireland he received a note from the Hon. the Rev. Walter Shirley, acknowledging the sympathy shown to him, as well as the prayers offered on his behalf. The Shirleys were closely related to the Countess of Huntingdon. The Earl was confined for over two months in the

Tower. On the day of his death he proceeded to Tyburn in his own carriage drawn by six horses, the crowds being so dense that the horses could move only at a snail's pace. During this progress, he is said to have worn his wedding clothes, and to have chewed tobacco. 'I have reason to bless God for the humbling lessons He has taught me through these, His awful visitations,' wrote Walter Shirley to Wesley, and then added: 'O sir, is there much danger now that I should pride myself upon my family?'

One of the most unmistakable symptoms of the utter degradation of the people, and the bias against religion of the upper classes, was seen in the success of the indecent and blasphemous comedies of Samuel Foote, who drew crowded houses while acting his own pieces, which, however, are too foul for quotation. Was it a retributive providence when Foote himself was falsely charged by an enemy with an infamous crime? He was acquitted, but the affair is supposed to have hastened his end. It is certainly depressing to think of Methodist preachers being caricatured on the stage at a time when they were working night and day to rescue the people from superstition and degradation.

In political matters, generally, Wesley seems to have sided with the King, so anxious was he for good order and the English Constitution to be preserved. He went against Wilkes not only because he would naturally be repelled by the notorious profligate character of that outlaw, but

because he thought that the principles advocated would lead to revolution. We have no more admiration for Wilkes as a man than Wesley had himself; but the political principles advocated in that era of mismanagement and corruption won the sympathy of people who did not very closely look at the character of the would-be reformers. Wesley's idea was that a complete success of the movement represented by Wilkes would mean the rule of the mob, or the rise of a dictator similar to Cromwell.

He had also misgivings of this kind in regard to the influence of 'Junius.' It has even been said that Wesley offered his services to the Government in the way of answering the indictments of the anonymous writer whose letters agitated the public mind in an unparalleled manner. Wesley proposed to write a political pamphlet for the Government, and he is reported to have remarked, 'I will show the difference between rhetoric and logic.' In the arena of politics, the great Methodist preacher might have been unequally matched against the mysterious 'Junius,' whose surpassing abilities he may possibly have underrated. What would Wesley have said concerning the identity of 'Junius' had he lived in our day? We can hardly think that he would have been absurd enough to recognise 'Junius' in Sir Philip Francis, who seems to have played at being 'Junius'! I once knew a lady, who, in her earlier years, was acquainted with an old nobleman who professed actually to know who 'Junius' was; and

he would become almost convulsed with laughter when the suggestion was made that Francis was the man who had worn the mask.

In taking account of Wesley's intercourse with the upper classes, we may conclude with a word concerning his friends and foes among the bishops. That he had many warm sympathisers among those who are supposed to be fathers in the Church, is well known, but there were some enemies. Among the latter we have to make mention of 'an episcopal buffoon,' as Tyerman calls him, Lavington of Exeter. Read in the light of to-day, the wild violence and scurrility of this contemptible time-server, or wolf in sheep's clothing, needed no answer; it would have been in unison with the bishop's character, had he possessed genius equal to the task, if he had written indecent plays for poor Foote, who ridiculed and mimicked Methodists on the stage. In one instance, Wesley undertook to reply to the western libeller and lampooner, and addressing him personally, has these remarks:—

'I am persuaded, every candid man, who rightly weighs what has been said, with any degree of attention, will clearly see, not only, that no one of those arguments is of any real force at all, but that you do not believe them yourself; you do not believe the conclusion which you pretend to prove; only you keep close to your laudable resolution of throwing as much dirt as possible.'

Lavington showed all the worst phases of the lowest example of an eighteenth-century bishop;

and we cannot suppose that such a man ever properly understood the Gospel. He seems to have been a liar, lampooner, and libeller all in one; but even in coming in contact with such a man as this—one who was false to his profession—the noble traits of Wesley's character were brought out. In all his controversies he never did or said anything which tarnished the Christian profession.

CHAPTER VIII

PRISONS AND PRISONERS

EXCEPT to duly appointed or privileged visitors who visit them for philanthropic purposes, the common gaols of the country at the present time are not easily accessible to merely inquisitive people. Some years ago, with an order from the late Sir William M'Arthur, then the Lord Mayor, I made the tour of Newgate, and was much interested. With the exception of two sentenced murderers, each of whom occupied a 'condemned' cell, the great City prison was empty, however. As the building, which had been used for centuries as a place of confinement and of punishment, was then already given up by the authorities, the sombre memories of former days, which were suggested at every step, were perhaps more vivid than they would have been had the prisoners and their keepers all been in the building. The rows of busts of executed murderers, the apparatus of the hangman, the arrangements for the passing out of the condemned when the gallows were in the street, and much more besides, all produced an impression of prison life in the

THE BURNING OF NEWGATE, 1780.

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nineteenth century, which in any case could never be effaced.

But when we go over a great modern prison, and note all its appointments, as well as its extreme cleanliness, we have to bear well in mind, that such things were not associated with a gaol in Wesley's early days. The prisons with which that great friend of the common people was familiar, were those which John Howard so ardently wished to see reformed, and which he greatly helped to improve. In general, the gaols of the country were nurseries of crime, while at the same time they were centres of physical contagion. We know how in the preceding century the judges, the lawyers, and the juries risked their lives through the contagion which the wretched prisoners brought into court at the assizes; and although epidemics of plague had ceased to break out in England, the moral and physical condition of the prisons in Wesley's time was practically very much what it had been in the days of his grandfather Dr. Annesley. In his visitation of the prisons, Wesley displayed all the heroism of one who carried his life in his hand while discharging his duty. He does not appear to have suffered any inconvenience, but others may have given their very lives to the service. Take this little life-history as told by Wesley himself at the opening of the year 1770:—

'One informed me that Mrs. Kitely, at Lambeth, not expected to live many hours, had a great desire to see me before she died. I went as quick

as possible; but when I came she seemed senseless, as well as speechless. I regarded not this, but spoke to her immediately; and immediately both her understanding and her speech returned, to testify an hope full of immortality. Having had her desire, she fell asleep two days before her husband, "a perfect pattern of true womanhood." A good wife, a good parent, a good mistress; and "her works shall praise her in the gates." How suitable was her death to her life! After many years spent in doing good, she redeemed a poor friendless youth out of prison, took the gaol-distemper and died.'

In the early days of the Revival, Wesley came in contact with certain offenders, who, as hypocrites, returned evil for good. A young man who was sentenced to death in 1740 had been enticed into crime by a fellow-worker, and the two helped themselves to money which belonged to the building-fund of the school at Kingswood. When 'he was reprieved for six weeks,' and afterwards 'was ordered for transportation,' his wronged employer knew not 'whether to rejoice or grieve'; for hanging was almost to be preferred to a living death. While Gwillam Snode was thus taken beyond the seas, Ramsey, the man who had caused him to fall, went on his way, but was actually hanged about two years later. Being 'destitute and in distress,' he applied for relief and was employed as a clerk. There were many suspicions concerning both this man and his companion, but as nothing could be proved against them, 'they

quietly returned to London.' There their sin found them out, however, one being transported, the other wishing to make a penitent confession, as his comrade had done, to his much-injured friend. 'But the hour was past: I could not now be permitted to see or speak with him,' Wesley remarks. 'So that he who before would not receive the word of God from my mouth, now desired what he could not obtain.'

The authorities did not always look with favour on the designs of the prison visitors. Well-meaning men, who, as Churchmen, supposed themselves to be all that was desirable, do not seem to have quite understood what kind of persons the enthusiastic Methodist preachers were. Thus, when at Newgate in Bristol in 1740, the Ordinary 'with much vehemence told me he was sorry I should turn Dissenter from the Church of England.' Of course the answer was, 'I do not know it'; at which the chaplain 'seemed a little surprised.' In some cases there was a flat refusal to allow such intruders to enter the prisons at all, or after coming for a time further admission was denied to them. A soldier, under sentence of death, was visited at Bristol, but when he gave evidence of change of heart, Wesley had a presentiment that something was about to happen. 'Do not expect to see me any more,' he said. 'He who has now begun a good work in your soul, will, I doubt not, preserve you to the end. But I believe Satan will separate us for a season.' This proved to be the case. The chief officer ordered that 'neither Mr. Wesley nor

any of his people should be admitted; for they were all Atheists.' In consequence of certain sermons which numbers of clergymen were not ashamed to preach, there may have been people who believed that Methodists were enemies of the faith; but even such were not greater fools than those who sought to hinder the Revival by raising the cry of 'No Popery.' In London, in 1742, 'all the turnkeys, as well as the keeper, were so good Christians they abhorred the name of a Methodist.'

While their keepers were thus stout opponents of the work, the prisoners themselves were of another mind, however. In 1742 Wesley visited a murderer in Newgate 'afflicted both in body and soul'; and while this malefactor was exhorted to repent, 'the rest of the felons flocked round, to whom I spoke strong words concerning the Friend of sinners, which they received with as great signs of amazement as if it had been a voice from heaven.' Then, when he went down into the common room, he had such a congregation as was in after years addressed by Elizabeth Fry. Still they gathered round him to hang on his words with eager interest, while he showed that God was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Another of Wesley's helpers in this service, and who may be said to have laid down her life for the sake of the guilty and the suffering, was Sarah Peters, who appears to have caught a malignant fever in Newgate, and of which she died after she

had 'praised God for ten days in the fires,' in November 1748. After observing her conduct for a number of years, Wesley says: 'I never saw her, upon the most trying occasions, in any degree ruffled or discomposed, but she was always loving, always happy.' In the early part of October, she and another went to Newgate to visit a number of malefactors condemned to death, 'although some would have dissuaded them from it because the gaol-distemper raged much among the prisoners.' One of those awaiting the gallows was John Lancaster, remarkable on account of his striking conversion while in Newgate. After leaving the dissolute rioting of Bartholomew Fair some time after midnight, he went to rob the Foundery Chapel, but, such was the respect which Wesley commanded even from such characters, that 'I trembled and shook, and made so great a noise that I thought all the family must be dead.' Sarah Peters made great efforts to obtain a reprieve, which, however, did not succeed. In the meantime she constantly 'visited all that were condemned in their cells,' exhorting them and praying with them. One named Thompson, 'quite an ignorant man,' became wonderfully transformed. John Roberts was 'utterly careless and sullen'; but ere long 'his countenance changed,' because 'the burden of sin was gone.' For days before he was hanged, William Gardiner was confined to his bed with malignant fever, but he found pardon. When she knew of her doom, Sarah Cunningham 'fell raving mad,' but when

reason returned she found pardon. The night before the morning that a number would be executed, Sarah Peters sought admission to Newgate at ten o'clock, but was not admitted until six on the following morning. Many of the condemned spent the night in praise and prayer, their behaviour being so uncommon that 'the officers stood like men affrighted.' Sarah Peters did not survive many days these prisoners whom she had been instrumental in benefiting. She fell a victim to deadly fever. It was not uncommon for malefactors, who were prostrated by this distemper, to be carried from their bed to the gallows! It seems to be a fact, that at the time when the outbreak of the Revival was manifest at several centres in the British Isles simultaneously, the gaols became singular on account of the conversions which took place in them. Forty years later, when Howard was at work among them, the condition of the prisons was of a more ordinary kind, so that when Wesley was prevailed on to preach a 'condemned sermon' at Bristol in 1781, he did so 'with little hope of doing good.'

It may be, that the prisons of the country continued to be at their worst during the former half of the eighteenth century; and what they had been in their darkest days may be inferred from what Wesley says about the reformation which had taken place at Bristol in 1761 :—

'Of all the seats of woe on this side hell, few, I suppose, exceed or even equal Newgate. If any

region of horror could exceed it a few years ago, Newgate in Bristol did; so great was the filth, the stench, the misery and wickedness, which shocked all who had a spark of humanity left. How was I surprised then, when I was there a few weeks ago! 1. Every part of it, above stairs and below, even the pit, wherein the felons are confined at night, is as clean and sweet as a gentleman's house; it being now a rule that every prisoner wash and clean his apartment thoroughly twice a week. 2. Here is no fighting or brawling. If any thinks himself ill-used, the cause is immediately referred to the keeper, who hears the contending parties face to face, and decides the affair at once. 3. The usual grounds of quarrelling are removed. For it is very rarely that one wrongs or cheats another, as being sure, if anything of this kind is discovered, to be committed to a closer confinement. 4. Here is no drunkenness suffered, however advantageous it might be to the keeper, as well as the tapster.'

The immorality characteristic of former days was checked, 'the women prisoners being narrowly observed and kept separate from the men'; while the disgraceful custom of admitting women of the town was not allowed. Men were found working, each at his trade, and Sunday was well observed. The prison thus wore a new face; nothing offended either the eye or the ear. Unhappily, however, all this was not evidence of a general reformation; all came from the action of one man. Wesley prayed that the Lord might remember him, and

asked if no one would follow his example. No wonder that Wesley found more than usual satisfaction in giving attention to such a prison as this. When at Bristol some months later he 'was desired by the condemned prisoners to give them one sermon more.' Among the prisoners was Patrick Ward, who 'was one-and-twenty years of age, and had scarce ever had a serious thought till he shot the man who went to take away his gun.' This youth went through a strange experience, until, on the day of his execution, 'his whole deportment breathed a peace and joy beyond all utterance.'

At that time one need not have gone far to find a sad contrast to the Bristol Newgate among the gaols of the country. Thus, the Marshalsea in Southwark was 'a nursery of all manner of wickedness. . . . A picture of hell upon earth.' It has also to be remembered that many of the prisoners found in them represented cases of oppression. No one realised more intensely than Wesley the injustice of certain laws and the over-reaching ways of contemporary lawyers. When at York in the summer of 1761, he visited 'a poor prisoner in the Castle,' who for 'running some brandy . . . worth near four pounds,' was declared to be 'indebted to his Majesty £577 and upwards.' This was a fraud or a cheat far more serious than the original offence. Says Wesley: 'I had formerly occasion to take notice of an hideous monster, called a Chancery Bill; I now saw the fellow to it, called a Declaration.' The

prisoner had given up smuggling to take to an honest calling; and the indictment was a lying representation more calculated to encourage crime than to check it. 'Where is the mercy of thus grinding the face of the poor?' asks Wesley, 'thus sucking the blood of a poor, beggared prisoner? Would not this be execrable villany, if the paper and writing together were only sixpence a sheet, when they have stripped him already of his little all, and not left him fourteen groats in the world?'

In those days, when death was the penalty for stealing sixpence, the hangman was kept so fully employed that one might have expected that all the hardened criminals in the kingdom would in time have been cut off. Thus, on Christmas-Day 1784, there were *forty-seven* prisoners in Newgate under sentence of death; and 'a few days after twenty of them died at once, five of whom died in peace.' On one occasion in 1756, a missive, among 'one or two remarkable letters' which Wesley had put into his hands, was from a person who expressed gratitude to God—'It pleased Him not to cut off my son in his sins. He gave him time to repent; and not only so, but a heart to repent.' At a time when the Revival was sweeping through the country with irresistible force, the heavenly fire touched this man's heart while he was confined in York Castle. 'His peace increased daily, till on Saturday, the day he was to die, he came out of the condemned-room, clothed in his shroud, and went into the cart. As he went on, the cheerfulness and composure of his countenance

were amazing to all the spectators.' With his last words he praised free Sovereign grace and called on the Lord Jesus to receive his soul.

From time to time some more or less sensational cases in connection with crime and Newgate would come to light, and while doing what he could as a Gospel minister to benefit the prisoners, Wesley was always interested in such narratives. When at Barnet in November 1772, he heard two remarkable stories, both of which were given as truth. A Mr. Samuel Savage, a man of large property, dreamed that while walking through a churchyard he saw a tombstone bearing his own name, and he died on the day which had been notified. The other matter related to a girl who was at school within two miles of her father's house. She dreamed that she was on the church-tower, when a man came and threw her down, but she was not much hurt until he threw her down again. Some time after she set out in the early morning to walk to her home :—

'At the entrance of a little wood she stopped, and doubted whether she should not go round instead of through it. But, knowing no reason, she went straight through till she came to the other side. Just as she was going over the stile, a man pulled her back by the hair. She immediately knew it was the same man whom she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and begged him, "For God's sake do not hurt me any more." He put his hands round her neck, and then squeezed her so that she instantly lost her

senses. He then stripped her, carried her a little way, and then threw her into a ditch.'

She was found in a speechless state, and covered with blood, by one of her father's servants, the assailant being soon after apprehended. 'He had all her clothes with him in a bag, which he said he found. It was three months before she was able to go abroad. He was arraigned at the assizes. She knew him perfectly, and swore to the man. He was condemned, and soon after executed.'

In the summer of 1759 a soldier of the King's Guard was sentenced to death at Berlin for desertion and theft, the man being 'a wretch abandoned to all manner of wickedness.' He was visited by a Christian friend, and though he was at first unconcerned, his heart was at length touched by the heavenly fire, and he became a genuine convert. An astonishing effect was produced by the repeated application of that text: 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' In the near prospect of the gallows 'his peace, triumph, and joy increased every hour.' On his way to the place of execution his expressions of confident faith were no less remarkable; but just when all expected that the fatal moment had arrived, 'Colonel H. called out "Pardon!"' The soldier confessed that it was 'like a ball shot through his body.' The friend who had visited this poor soldier was now fearful lest he should relapse into his former state, but he stood fast in the faith.

In the fall of 1759 Wesley's attention was attracted to the sufferings of the French prisoners of war, and the action he took seems to have led to something like a general reformation in their condition. At Knowle, near Bristol, there were about eleven hundred of these unfortunate captives who were 'without anything to lie on but a little dirty straw, or anything to cover them but a few thin foul rags, either by day or night, so that they died like rotten sheep.' Being 'much affected,' Wesley preached from those words in Exodus: 'Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.' A sum of £24 was collected, with which 'we bought linen and woollen cloth, which were made up into shirts, waistcoats, and breeches.' The Bristol Corporation then sent supplies for the French prisoners, while friends in London and other parts of the kingdom followed the example.

From time to time in that less sensitive age, there were subjects hanged whose tender age should have saved them from the gallows. Now and then the humane feelings of Judges and Counsel would find expression, and this notable instance is told by Wesley as having occurred at the Assizes at Worcester in 1775:—

'A boy being beaten by his master, ran away, and wandering about till he was half-starved was then allowed to lie in the hay-loft of an inn. In the night he stole into the room where two gentlemen lay (probably not very sober), and,

without waking them, picked the money out of both their pockets; though their breeches lay under their head. In the morning, having confessed the fact, he was committed to gaol. He made no defence; so one of the Counsellors rose up, and said, "My lord, as there is none to plead for this poor boy, I will do it myself." He did so, and then added, "My lord, it may be this bad boy may make a good man. And I humbly conceive it might be best to send him back to his master. I will give him a guinea towards his expenses." "And I will give him another," said the Judge. Which he did, with a mild and serious reproof. So he was sent back, full of good resolutions.'

What such a boy might have become if he had not been checked in time may be inferred from one of Wesley's own adventures. On August 21, 1779, he was at Coventry: 'I took coach for London. I was nobly attended; behind the coach were ten convicted felons, loudly blaspheming and rattling their chains; by my side sat a man with a loaded blunderbuss, and another upon the coach.' It does not appear that drastic laws tended to lessen crime.

Next to John Howard, Silas Told, 1711–1779, may be regarded as the prison visitor of the eighteenth century of whom we know most. In a note 'To the Reader' prefixed to Told's Autobiography, Wesley remarks that he was 'a man of good understanding, although not much indebted to education.' In his life are many remarkable instances of Divine Providence, some of which are

of an extraordinary kind. He came of a good family, however, although a large amount of property was lost through the action of a criminal housekeeper. This woman served Silas's grandfather, 'an eminent physician at London,' at a time when such practitioners were a far greater peril to sufferers than actual disease. At a suitable age, Silas was 'admitted into the hospital of Edward Colston, Esq., on St. Augustine's Back, near the quay at Bristol: a school, I dare venture to say, that cannot be surpassed by any throughout Great Britain for piety and Christian discipline.' Told relates that Colston commenced his distinguished philanthropic career by showing uncommon liberality in the way of relieving unhappy prisoners at Bristol. In after years this may have inspired Silas to become himself a prison visitor of the most heroic kind in connection with the Methodist Revival. He makes this reference to the benefactor to whom he was indebted for such education as he received:—

'He was the son of Edward Colston, a journeyman soap-boiler, whose wages did not exceed ten shillings per week. He had ten children then living, of whom Edward was the eldest, who, when he had arrived at an age fit to be put an apprentice, was bound to a Virginia captain, about the time that the colonists were transported to North America. This proved his first rise, as his behaviour and humble readiness to obey his superiors moved many of the merchants, who first settled there, to make Edward the cabin-boy many

presents; insomuch that before his ship departed from America for England he had acquired the sum of fifty pounds; and being of an exceeding liberal disposition, on his arrival at Bristol he hastened with the fifty pounds and dispersed every farthing thereof to the prisoners in Newgate. Shortly after he sailed again to Virginia, where, through the kind providence of God, he gathered among his former friends twice the money of the preceding voyage, and disposed of the whole after the same manner.'

During the early part of his life, Silas Told went through an adventurous experience on the sea; and after giving this up for service on land, he accepted a schoolmaster's place at Staplefoot-Tauney, Essex, where he found the curate in private to be no better than a professed infidel. He gave up the company of this man; he was obliged soon after to give up the tutorship, and to take a situation in London. Although in early life he had been subject to religious impressions, he had lapsed into indifference and even profanity; so that when he was first introduced to Wesley and the people at the Foundery, at the very outset of the Revival in 1740, he thought that the 'whole fraternity was a mixture of false prophets and hypocrites.' His first sight of Wesley was at an early morning service, when 'a whisper ran through the congregation, "Here he comes! here he comes!"' At that time no one had been accustomed more to despise the person and work of Wesley. Who was he? He might be 'some farmer's son, who,

not able to support himself, was making a penny in this low manner.' That service very effectively broke down all opposition, however; and Told became not only a devoted Methodist, but the first schoolmaster at the Foundery at a salary of ten shillings a week. On one occasion Wesley preached from the words 'I was sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not.' While listening to this discourse, Told says, 'I was sensible of my negligence; . . . I was filled with horror of mind beyond expression.' He first visited Newgate in the fall of 1748, and attended Lancaster and seven others in the cart to Tyburn; but 'not without much shame, because I perceived the greater part of the populace considered me as one of the sufferers.'

Had Told been chaplain of Newgate he could hardly have given the prisoners more attention, or have been more successful in his efforts. He actually joined between thirty and forty of the debtors 'as a regular Society.' As time went on, the devoted man found the work increase on his hands. He says: 'I preached in every prison, as well as in many workhouses, in and about London; and frequently travelled to almost every town within twelve miles of the Metropolis.' While he thus strove to comfort and benefit others, however, he himself suffered for some time, like Bunyan, from the slavish bondage of fear. After the labours of the day, he would often take a solitary walk in the neighbouring Hoxton-Fields 'till nine, ten, and eleven o'clock, roaring for the very disquietude of my soul.'

After the work in Newgate and elsewhere had continued for over twenty years, Told still realised that the service was 'so disagreeable a task to flesh and blood,' as to render prayer for wisdom and fortitude constantly necessary. The keepers, the Ordinary, and even the prisoners themselves, were of those who opposed: 'The Ordinary constantly, on Sunday morning, stationed himself a few yards from Newgate, for the space of two hours and more, to obstruct my entrance.' Turnkeys were also ordered not to allow the Methodist to enter; but notwithstanding, he managed by some means to preach to the debtors. The Ordinary at one time succeeded in preventing the visitor from entering the debtors' side; but the work would then seem to flourish more among the felons. Non-Christian clerics could not stay the Revival in its irresistible course.

Told's method was to allow himself to be locked in the cell with each prisoner successively that he visited. There would at times be quite a procession of carts from Newgate to Tyburn, and in one of these the Methodist visitor would be found. Executions were a chief part of the business of Newgate in those days, but between these he 'frequently preached and exhorted among the felons and debtors; and constantly visiting the sick in all parts of the prison.'

Certain offenders with whom Silas Told was concerned forfeited their lives through one of those freaks in which persons of fashion and of social position have frequently shown themselves too apt

to indulge. The case of Whalley, Morgan, Brett, and Dupree excited unwonted interest, because each was a gentleman of position, and the crime for which they were sentenced to death can hardly be regarded as more than a drunken freak after a convivial meeting. The father of Brett was 'an eminent divine in Dublin,' Whalley was a man of fortune, as was also Dupree, while Morgan was a naval officer in the British fleet. Silas Told thus describes how they fell into trouble:—

'They all agreed upon a party of pleasure at the election of a member for Chelmsford in Essex; and after they had glutted themselves with immoderate eating and drinking, they consented to divert themselves by going out upon the road, and robbing the first person they should meet. A farmer chanced to pass, whom they attacked and robbed of all his money. The farmer having met with assistance, pursued them into Chelmsford, where they were secured and removed to London. Here they were cast, received sentence of death, and ordered for execution.'

The case of Morgan, the naval officer, became of more romantic interest, because after being condemned he was visited by a daughter of the Duke of Hamilton, to whom he was engaged to be married. This young lady not only visited her lover in prison, she daily pleaded with the King for his life. For long George III. turned a deaf ear to her entreaties, but at last he yielded on condition that the officer should not know of the reprieve until he arrived at the place

of execution. Told was at Tyburn when the reprieve arrived, but seeing a man missing in the cart, and seeing him fall to the ground through fainting away at the news of his respite, it was thought to be an attempt at rescue. When visited in Newgate some time later he had not recovered. A very serious impression was made on the officer's mind, but it seemed to wear off through association with a debtor named Barrett, who, with another, was soon after hanged for forgery. Barrett was a cheat as well as a forger; for 'his creditors, having suspicion that he had some effects concealed in Newgate, obtained an order to search it, and found to the amount of £5000 in bank-notes cut in halves.'

The cases which most tried the nerves of Silas Told were those of persons who were innocent of the crimes for which they suffered. There was a Judge named Dennison who won an unhappy notoriety in trying charges of this character, and whose gift in browbeating guiltless prisoners must have been hardly inferior to that of Jeffreys in the century before. It was Dennison who tried Coleman, a brewer's clerk, who was hanged 'for the supposed abuse of a young woman'; and then followed the judicial murder of Mary Edmonson for the supposed murder of her aunt. About three years after his death, 'Mr. Coleman's innocence was brought to light; the carman who drove him to the place of execution having been proved to be the man, and that by his own confession: he was therefore tried, condemned, and executed;

and one, Mr. Delagourd, who was found perjured in Coleman's case, was sentenced to stand in the pillory, opposite St. George's Church, in the Borough. Afterwards he, with two others who were concerned in the taking away Mr. Coleman's life, were transported.'

If possible, the case of the pious and modest young woman, Mary Edmonson, was even still more infamous. She was condemned 'upon mere circumstances, as no positive evidence against her could be produced.' Notwithstanding, Judge Dennison acted his part in the most genuine Jeffreys-like style. The poor prisoner 'suffered very severe and rigorous treatment.' When she asserted her innocence, this so-called Justice still laid 'the murder to her charge, calling her a notorious vile wretch, assuring her that she would be damned if she denied the fact, as matters were evident.' The man who was believed to be the murderer was long afterwards committed to Newgate on his own confession of the crime; but on his denial of it at his trial, the same precious Judge Dennison acquitted him. 'However, he soon went on the highway, and committed a robbery for which he was tried, cast, and condemned; but . . . Judge Dennison, to prevent clamours, got him a reprieve for transportation.'

One of his most notable converts was Harris, 'the flying highwayman,' who on one occasion behaved so violently in the chapel at Newgate that 'the Ordinary was affrighted and ran away.' He subsequently became quite changed.

When unjust laws had harsh judges for their administrators no one could tell to what lengths judicial cruelty might go. One of the more touching cases of legal murder in those bad times, was that of 'one Anderson, a poor labouring man, whose character until now was unimpeachable, touching his industry, sobriety, and honesty.' He was a loving husband and father; but becoming the victim of a harsh creditor, he 'was totally destitute of money, clothes, and a spot where to lay their heads.' Being without work, one morning, Anderson said to his wife: 'My dear, I have a strong inclination to go down upon the quays: it may be the Lord will provide for me a loaf of bread, or some employment, whereby we may sustain ourselves a little longer, or else we shall perish with hunger.' Hardly knowing what he did, he met two women in Hoxton-Fields, and asking if they had money, he took sixpence from them. For this, his first offence, Anderson was tried, condemned, and hanged. Referring to his many years experience among prisoners in Newgate, Silas Told says: 'I have not seen such meet, loving, and tender spirits as appeared in the countenance and deportment of this poor man and his wife. Indeed, they were naturally inclined to few words; but the woman frequently seating herself by her husband's side, and throwing her arms round his neck, they would shed floods of tears to mitigate the anguish which overwhelmed their united hearts; but it is impossible to do justice to their exquisite sensibility and tender affection.'

He gives accounts of several who were condemned for forgery, persons of considerable station in the world. One of these was named Powell, and Told sat with him in the coach on the way to Tyburn, 'and afterwards went to the other malefactors, who were conveyed in carts.' One of the more noteworthy examples was a youth named Slocomb, 'who was executed for defrauding his father of £300 in the stock of the South Sea House.' The youth might have escaped the gallows; but, come what would, the worthless father refused to bear the loss. Thus Slocomb was condemned, and then, as Told remarks, 'the lump of adamant, his father, then retired to the country, nor would he after that see or hear from his son; neither did he once write to him, nor give him any kind of advice, or remit him any relief, notwithstanding he lay a long time under sentence, before he was ordered for execution.' He was an amiable youth, and seems to have benefited by Told's attentions. Thus went on this succession of judicial murders until, with the execution of Thomas Maynard, on the last day of 1829, the iniquity of hanging for forgery came to an end.

The last case to which Silas Told refers, the particulars of which he gives at length, is that of Mrs. Brownrigg, who was hanged in 1767 for what was held to be the murder of her maid-servant, Mary Clifford. This woman appears to have been a Christian backslider, and though her beating the girl cannot be defended, it is evident that murder was never intended. Told visited her repeatedly

in Newgate, he accompanied her in the cart to Tyburn, and he believed that as a penitent she was saved. We have some vivid glimpses which enable us in some measure to realise what an eighteenth-century street scene was like during the progress of any notorious offender from the Old Bailey to Tyburn. 'I may say with the greatest truth,' remarks Told, 'nothing could have equalled them but the spirits let loose from the infernal pit; and, to be brief, this was the spirit of the wicked multitude all the way to the place of execution.'

This comprehensive work, carried on in Newgate and elsewhere, shows how the Revival entered places where it would seem converts were least likely to be found. The devotion which the visitors showed in the service was characteristic of early Methodism. Silas Told died in December 1779, but the work to which he had put his hand, and in course of which he had so greatly distinguished himself, was destined still to go on. Not very long before John Wesley had reorganised the Christian Community, a mission founded by the Huguenots soon after their settlement in this country in the seventeenth century, and which still continues to carry on service of this character in workhouses and hospitals.

CHAPTER IX

BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL

THE best-remembered apparition of the eighteenth century was the Cock Lane Ghost, and that was an imposture, although it was an imposition of an ingenious and interesting kind. Mr. and Mrs. William Parsons and their daughter were the agents, and the sensation they caused seems to have been brought about by a ventriloquist. They were eventually sentenced to imprisonment, while Parsons himself was subjected to the additional penalty of the pillory. What strikes one is the remarkable fact that the offenders had the sympathy of the public, *e.g.*:—

'The father appearing to be out of his mind at the time he was to stand in the pillory, the execution of that part of the sentence was deferred to another day, when, as well as on the other days of his standing there, the populace took so much compassion of him, that, instead of using him ill, they made a handsome collection for him.'

It will be evident to everyone that the times were so different from our own, that the people seemed to be naturally more credulous. They

were probably less so, however, than was the case in the seventeenth century, when even a writer like Bunyan seemed capable of believing anything in the way of the supernatural if it only tended to illustrate a point he was enforcing.

That Wesley was a firm believer in supernatural appearances everybody knows who has read his Diary; but in going so far as he did in this direction he probably believed no more than many of his followers at the present day. Here, again, the times of the beginning of the Revival were so different from our own, that we can hardly put ourselves in the place of those who were then living. The phenomena at the services were such, that not to have believed in people being possessed with evil spirits would have been regarded by Wesley as showing want of faith. When at Oxford in December 1738, he met with a case which would confirm him in his settled belief: 'At St. Thomas's was a young woman, raving mad, screaming and tormenting herself continually. I had a strong desire to speak to her. The moment I began she was still. The tears ran down her cheeks all the time I was telling her, "Jesus of Nazareth is able and willing to deliver you." O where is faith upon earth?'

It was just about this time that he directs attention to the subject of dreams. I believe it was no less a philosopher than Dr. Watts who was not disposed to give too much attention to dreams, and at the same time would not utterly neglect them. Was there not a man who, while taking

down a certain building, dreamed that a stone in a certain part fell and killed him; and who, through not heeding the advice to avoid going beneath that stone, was eventually killed by it?

Referring to November 19, 1738, when he was at Oxford, Wesley says: 'On Monday night I was greatly troubled in dreams; and about eleven o'clock waked in an unaccountable consternation, without being able to sleep again.' This would have been particularly mysterious had it not been for what followed. It turned out that one who was to have been Wesley's pupil, entered a porter's lodge where a number of persons were sitting, and presented a pistol, as if in sport, first at one and then at another. 'He then attempted twice or thrice to shoot himself; but it would not go off. Upon his laying it down, one took it up and blew out the priming. He was very angry, went and got fresh prime, came in again, sat down, beat the flint with his key, and about twelve, pulling off his hat and wig, said he would die like a gentleman, and shot himself through the head.'

It is evident that the phenomena seen at the meetings of the early days of the eighteenth-century Revival were no ordinary outcome of excitement or sensation. Wesley himself regarded them as direct evidence of the working of the Spirit of God, although there may have been counterfeits wrought by the powers of evil. As was quite natural, medical men had their interest excited; and during the manifestations at Bristol in 1738, there was an observant physician 'who was much

afraid there might be fraud or imposture in the case.' When, however, he saw for himself what took place at the Bristol Newgate during a service attended by the prisoners, 'he could hardly believe his own eyes and ears.' A certain woman was greatly affected; and, determined not to be imposed upon, 'he went and stood close to her, and observed every symptom, till great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook. He then knew not what to think, being clearly convinced it was not fraud, nor yet any natural disorder. But when both her soul and body were healed in a moment, he acknowledged the finger of God.'

These cases were not confined to the meetings; and an interesting fact in connection with them is, that some of the more remarkable instances were those of outsiders who had spoken of the manifestations as being mere delusions of the devil. There was at Bristol a weaver of this character, one who was 'zealous for the Church, and against Dissenters of every denomination.' This man, on hearing of people's 'strange fits,' went to see for himself, and was more emphatic than ever in denouncing all as an imposture. Soon after, Wesley heard that this weaver 'was fallen raving mad.' In his own house, while reading, 'he changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground.' Among those who went to the house was Wesley himself, who found the weaver on the floor, while a room full of people looked on

in wonder. He roared, beat himself against the ground, and while his breast heaved 'as in the pangs of death,' there were 'great drops of sweat trickling down his face.' Wesley concludes his account by saying, 'we all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty.'

But whatever might happen, there were still people who thought that all might be explained away. 'These were purely natural effects; the people fainted only because of the heat and closeness of the rooms.' There were others who were 'sure it was all a cheat: they might help it if they would.' Then it was triumphantly asked, why the phenomena did not occur in the light of the sun, and not alone 'in their private Societies.' Then it happened that similar things happened in the open air before thousands of beholders—'One, and another, and another, was struck to the earth; exceedingly trembling at the presence of his power.' Some little time later, during a service among the sailors of Wapping, there were some who 'exceedingly trembled and quaked'; and in some cases they showed such strength in their convulsions that 'four or five persons could not hold one of them.' More remarkable than the physical symptoms were the moral or spiritual transformations which followed.

For some time even Whitefield was incredulous; he thought that there were 'gross misrepresentations of matters of fact.' On the next day, however, while Whitefield himself was preaching

at Baptist Mills, near Bristol, similar things occurred. 'Four persons sank down close to him, almost in the same moment.' The symptoms were similar to those already described, although there may not have been two cases quite alike. Thus, one woman lay 'furiously gnashing with her teeth,' and several persons with difficulty held her, 'especially when the name of Jesus was named.' In one instance, when a question was asked, it was as if a demon in possession answered!

What Wesley calls 'a spirit of laughter' was still more extraordinary; and it would have been quite incredible to him if he had not, years before, when a student at Oxford, passed through similar experience. 'Part of Sunday my brother and I then used to spend in walking in the meadows and singing psalms,' he says. 'But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a loud laughter. I asked him if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but we were forced to go home without singing another line.'

There were cases that occurred at times which puzzled the best physicians. Of one of these we find Wesley remarking, 'the plain case is, she is tormented by an evil spirit, following her day and night.' Another afflicted in a similar way confessed, 'I have applied to physicians, and taken all sorts of medicines, but am never the better.' 'No, nor ever will,' said Wesley, 'till a better Physician than these bruises Satan under her feet.' The great

Methodist leader differed from some of his contemporaries in not being afraid of an evil spirit. In one instance a minister who was asked to visit a woman took alarm at her distorted countenance, and at 'her roaring in so strange a manner,' that he made his escape while he was safe, exclaiming, 'It is the devil!' Wesley took this to be 'some unphilosophical minister'; for had it been otherwise, he would have said, 'Stark mad! Send her to Bedlam!' There was, indeed, one inmate of Bedlam, who 'was in a moment struck raving mad' while speaking against Wesley and his brother before the Society at Kingswood.

When bodily health also came with the salvation of the soul, Wesley does not seem to have doubted that such might be the case. A lady whose son had long been ill 'of a wasting distemper' called on him to say that when he was in 'an agony of prayer' God revealed Himself, and he became pardoned and cured at the same time.

In matters pertaining to witchcraft, Wesley was more credulous than will be the case with many who read his accounts. Of a woman who confessed to having been delivered from such diabolical influences in 1746, he says, 'I scarce ever heard such a preacher before,' though he confesses that what she said was an 'odd account.' It was at Lanzufried in Wales:—

'Near seven years since she affronted one of her neighbours, who thereupon went to Francis Morgan (a man famous in those parts), and gave him fourteen shillings to do his worst to her; that

the next night as soon as she was in bed, there was a sudden storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, in the midst of which she felt all her flesh shudder, and knew the devil was close to her; that at the same time a horse she had in the stable below, which used to be as quiet as a lamb, leaped to and fro, and tore in such a manner that she was forced to turn him out; that a tree which grew at the end of the house was torn up by the roots; that from henceforth she had no rest day or night, being not only in fear and horror of mind, but in the utmost torment of body, feeling as if her flesh was tearing off with burning pinchers; that till this day, she had never had any respite or ease; but now she knew God had delivered her, and she believed He would still deliver her body and soul, and bruise Satan under her feet.'

In 1753 a very curious case occurred of a man's preaching in his sleep, the sermon being divided into well-arranged divisions, and a clergyman who was supposed to come into the meeting to interrupt it was spoken to and argued with; and after the disorder was over and the service concluded, each was apparently shaken by the hand, with 'good-night,' etc. As the sleeper knew nothing of all this in the morning, Wesley asks, By what principles of philosophy can such things be accounted for?

Wesley was quite as interested in narratives of wonders and of supernatural appearances as his friend Dr. Johnson; but although we regard him as a somewhat credulous man, we are not to suppose that he believed every-

thing that was told him. In the year 1754, a letter from Cornwall appeared in a London paper relating to an appearance in the sky. Being at St. Just in the year following, Wesley met 'the two persons who occasioned that letter,' and found both James and Thomas to be 'sensible men and no Methodists.' While interested in the story, he thought that time alone could show the meaning 'if it was real,' *e.g.*:—

'In July was twelvemonth, they both said, as they were walking from St. Just church-town towards Saucreet, Thomas, happening to look up, cried out, "James, look, look! What is that in the sky?" The first appearance, as James expressed it, was, three large columns of horsemen, swiftly pressing on from south-west to north-east; a broad streak of sky being between each column. Sometimes they seemed to run thick together; then to thin their ranks. Afterward they saw a large fleet of three-mast ships,in full sail towards the Lizard Point. This continued above a quarter of an hour: then, all disappearing, they went on their way.'

The only rational explanation of such a phenomenon is that there are 'pictures' in the sky just as there are in the fire; and while all are equally interesting, no one save a very credulous person indeed would attach such 'meaning' to them as may have been the case with James and Thomas. About the same time, John Pearce mentioned a remarkable occurrence which has to be recognised as a rare providence:—

'While he lived at Helstone, as their class was

meeting one evening, one of them cried, with an uncommon tone, "We will not stay here; we will go to" such an house, which was in quite a different part of the town. They all rose immediately, and went; though neither they nor she knew why. Presently, after they were gone, a spark fell into a barrel of gunpowder, which was in the next room, and blew up the house. So did God preserve those who trusted in Him, and prevent the blasphemy of the multitude.'

Now and then we come upon accounts more weird in their details, which Wesley would appear to have accepted as genuine, and which may well prompt modern readers to exclaim, with Shakespeare, 'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' Mrs. B——, who in 1756 was the wife of a silversmith at Cork, and 'a person of piety and veracity,' had in youth been 'addressed by way of marriage' by a young man named Mercier, an officer in the army. Things were purchased for the wedding; and it was while preparations for that event were in progress that the bride-elect passed through the experience as related to Wesley:—

'One night, my sister Molly and I being asleep in our bed, I was awakened by the sudden opening of the side curtain, and, starting up, saw Mr. Mercier standing by the bedside. He was wrapped up in a loose sheet, and had a napkin, folded like a nightcap, on his head. He looked at me very earnestly, and lifting up the napkin which much shaded his face, showed me the left side of his

head, all bloody and covered with his brains. The room, meantime, was quite light. My terror was excessive, which was still increased by his stooping over the bed and embracing me in his arms. My cries alarmed the whole family, who came crowding into the room. Upon their entrance he gently withdrew his arms, and ascended as it were through the ceiling. I continued for some time in strong fits. When I could speak, I told them what I had seen. One of them, a day or two after, going to the post-master for letters, found him reading the newspapers, in which was an account that Cornet Mercier, going into Christ Church belfry in Dublin, just after the bells had been ringing, and standing under the bells, one of them, which was turned bottom upwards, suddenly turning again, struck one side of his head, and killed him on the spot. On further inquiry we found he was struck on the left side of his head.'

It was in 1757, when he was in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, that persons 'who were eye and ear witnesses' told Wesley of a very gruesome thing which had happened in that locality. The son of a certain man married without his father's consent, and this so enraged the father that 'he wished his right arm might burn off, if ever he gave or left him sixpence.' The man died and left the estate to the son, as if nothing had happened, however. Before burial the corpse was found to be internally on fire. Wesley thus concludes the story:—

'His right arm was nearly burnt off; his head so burnt that the brains appeared; and a smoke came out of the crown of his head like the steam of boiling water. When they cast water upon his body, it hissed, just as if cast on red-hot iron. Yet the sheet which was upon him was not singed; but that under him, with the pillow-bier and pillow, and the plank on which he lay, were all burned, and looked as black as charcoal.'

If possible, still greater marvels were to come! The funeral was at Abchester Church; but after the nailing down of the coffin-lid 'a noise of burning and crackling was heard therein.' The grave was near the steeple; but no sooner were the people assembled than 'the steeple was observed to shake. The people hastened away; and it was well they did, for presently part of the steeple fell: so that had they stayed two minutes longer they must have been crushed in pieces.'

It was still about the same time, or in 1757, that 'a surprising thing' happened near Misterton. On a certain market-day, a woman who lived with her sister at Stockwith said, 'I do not think to go to market to-day, for I dreamed I was drowned in riding across one of the drains on Haxey-Car.' She was soon laughed out of this, and went to market with several companions; and at a place 'where the water was scarce a yard deep slipped off her horse.' It is added, 'Several looked on, but none once thought of pulling her out till she was past recovery.' In a similar case of dreaming of drowning, it was a woman who dreamed that her

husband had gone out of his depth, and before he went to his work she drew from him a promise that he would not go into the water. A friend persuaded him, however, and he lost his life. 'One might naturally enquire, What became of John Hanson?' says Wesley. 'As soon as his partner sank, he swam from him to the other side, put on his clothes, and went straight home.'

Wesley was strongly impressed with the way in which divers savage opposers of the work were cut off in the midst of their days. Being in the neighbourhood of Sheffield in the summer of 1757, he said, 'How quiet is this country now since the persecutors are no more seen.' There was one amazon who swore that she would wash her hands in the heart's blood of the next preacher who came; but before such an evangelist appeared she was in her grave. Then there was 'a stout healthy man,' who said that there would be 'nothing but praying and preaching after May-Day'; but he undertook to 'make noise enough to stop it.' Before May-Day he was buried. A certain nobleman's servant was quite as bitter and threatening; he 'told many lies purposely to make mischief'; but before long he was drowned in one of his master's fish-ponds. To the early Methodists and their leader, these were something more than mere natural occurrences; they were only to be explained as special providences.

There are some things of considerable interest as narratives or anecdotes, or as illustrative of the tendencies of the times, but which even a credulous

reader of the twentieth century may be excused for accepting *cum grano salis*. When in Ireland at Midsummer 1758, Wesley conversed with a woman named Shea, of Athlone, 'concerning a strange account' which was then being talked about. As a convert to evangelical doctrine, the woman was at first opposed by her father, besides being taken in hand by the priest, but at length she was allowed to go her own way. The story of her conversion must be given in her own words:—

'When I was ten years old, the preaching began at Athlone. I liked and often heard it, though my parents were zealous Papists, till they removed into the country. I then grew as zealous as them, and was zealous in reading the Popish prayers, till I was about thirteen; when, taking the Mass Book one day, to read my prayers, I could not see one word. I continued blind, just able to discern light from darkness, but not to read, or to do any work; till, after three months, casting my eye on a New Testament, I could read clearly. I said to myself, "I won't read this Protestant Book; I will read my own book." Accordingly, I opened the Mass Book, but could not see one word; it appeared all dark and black. I made the trial thrice over, holding the Mass Book in one hand, and the Testament in the other: I could not see anything in the Mass Book, but could read the Testament as well as ever. On this, I threw away the Mass Book, fully resolved to meddle with it no more.'

Second sight was one of the things which excited the interest even of educated persons. Wesley

would give an instance, but he was not sufficiently credulous to accept all the details without question. 'They that can believe this, may believe a man's getting into a bottle,' he remarks, after giving one account which a lad 'about fourteen years old' gave as a piece of his own experience. A man had been missing for about three weeks, and one interested in the affair had desired that a boy might be brought to him. This is young Rushford's story as given to Wesley at Bramley, in July 1761:—

'He put me into a bed, with a looking-glass in my hand, and covered me all over. Then he asked me whom I had a mind to see; and I said, "My mother." I presently saw her with a lock of wool in her hand, standing just in the place, and the clothes she was in, as she told me afterwards. Then he told me look again for the man that was missing, who was one of our neighbours. And I looked and saw him riding towards Idle, but he was very drunk; and he stopped at the alehouse and drank two pints more, and he pulled out a guinea to change. Two men stood by, a big man and a little man; and they went on before him, and got two hedgestakes; and when he came up on Windle-Common, at the top of the hill, they pulled him off his horse, and killed him, and threw him into a coal-pit. And I saw it all as plain as if I was close to them. And if I saw the men, I should know them again.'

It seems that Wesley and some of his preachers looked with favour on the doctrine of faith-healing.

In 1761 there was a young woman in London who was afflicted with sores which might have been regarded as an incurable disease. The doctors of the day were a greater danger than any curable complaint; and considering that she 'was let blood many times, and took hemlock thrice a day,' the wonder is that she survived. One of the preachers asked, 'Have you faith to be healed?'

'I said, "Yes." He prayed for me, and in a moment all my pain was gone. But the next day I felt a little pain again; I clapped my hands on my breasts, and cried out, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole." It was gone, and from that hour I have had no pain, no soreness, no lumps, or swelling; both my breasts were perfectly well, and have been so ever since.'

Wesley shows that three plain facts are stated, and asks, 'Which of these can with any modesty be denied?' About this time Wesley tells us of rain being stopped at an open-air service—'I am persuaded in answer to the prayer of faith.'

Among the superstitions which had to be discountenanced was an occasional prophecy to the effect that the world would come to an end on a certain day, and this was believed by a number of alarmed and credulous people. In the early part of 1763, as we are told in the Annual Register for that year, 'one Bell, a corporal in the Life Guards, was taken up for preaching in an unlicensed meeting-house, and taking upon him to discover to people the state of their consciences, and even foretell the end of the world, to the great terror of

his weak and illiterate audience.' A few days later we find Wesley preaching at Spitalfields on the text, 'Prepare to meet thy God,' when, as he says, 'I largely showed the utter absurdity of the supposition that the world was to end that night. But notwithstanding all I could say, many were afraid to go to bed, and some wandered about in the fields, being persuaded that if the world did not end, at least London would be swallowed up by an earthquake. I went to bed at my usual time, and was fast asleep about ten o'clock.'

The times which succeeded the first outbreak of the Revival were often in certain localities characterised by remarkable symptoms of religious excitement, and this was occasionally of a kind which had to be regretted. Thus in 1763 the antics of certain persons while singing 'a verse of a hymn' are found to have made 'a great noise in Wales.' When a meeting was over a favourite verse would be given out, and this would be sung 'over and over with all their might, perhaps above thirty, yea, forty times.' Their extravagant action then became more or less alarming: 'The bodies of two or three, sometimes ten or twelve, are violently agitated; and they leap up and down, in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together.' Wesley thought that such were 'honest, upright men,' who had the love of God in their hearts, and yet were victims of 'the devices of Satan,' who thus sought to bring 'discredit on the work of God.'

From time to time accounts were received from

the preachers of cases which were understood to show symptoms of demoniacal possession. In the fall of 1763 Wesley received 'a very strange account from a man of sense as well as integrity' relating to a woman who at times would fall 'into such a fit as was dreadful to look at.' A physician who attended said the case was 'partly natural, partly diabolical.' It was typical of other instances which were said to have been cured by the prayers of the faithful. At the height of her paroxysm 'Satan raged vehemently. He caused her to roar in an uncommon manner; then to shriek, so that it went through our heads; then to bark like a dog. Then her face was distorted to an amazing degree, her mouth being drawn from ear to ear, and her eyes turned opposite ways, and starting as if they would start out of her head.'

While taking notice of such phenomena, Wesley had a keen eye to detect impostures, while still showing interest in them. Thus, in middle-age he read the Life of Lilly the Astrologer, and finding that Lilly believed in himself, he says, 'Was ever man so deluded?' More remarkable than such illusions, however, was the fact that educated people extended to him their patronage or lived in terror of his powers. The Dean of Westminster sanctioned a search for treasure being made in the cloister at the Abbey; and may have been as disappointed as Lilly and his labourers when demons raised a storm at midnight to stop the operations. At one time or another, even the Government seem to have supposed that Lilly—who sided with the

Parliament during the civil wars—was in possession of Republican secrets, or that he knew something about the causes of the Fire of London!

But while Wesley could thus detect imposture and public credulity, modern readers will probably think that he was himself at times sometimes too credulous. At all events, 'the particulars of a remarkable occurrence' which took place in 1763 are not of a commonplace kind, *e.g.*:—

'On Friday, August 19, a gentleman, who was at Lisbon during the great earthquake, walking with his friend near Brighthelmstone, in Sussex, and looking south-west towards the sea, cried out, "God grant the wind may rise; otherwise we shall have an earthquake quickly. Just so the clouds whirled to and fro, and so the sky looked, that day at Lisbon." Presently the wind did rise, and brought an impetuous storm of rain and large hail. Some of the hailstones were larger than hen-eggs. It moved in a line about four miles broad, making strange havoc as it passed quite over the land, till it fell into the river, not far from Sheerness. And wherever it passed it left a hot sulphurous steam, such as almost suffocated those it reached.'

Of course an uncommon kind of storm may have occurred; but the point is that an earthquake was averted by the visitation! In some cases Wesley found it hard to draw the line between what was natural and what was preternatural. A Welsh parish near Brecon became notorious for a strange distemper which broke out among the people in 1764, where it had also shown itself about a generation

earlier. Those affected were 'chiefly girls and a few grown persons.' The symptoms were as follow:—

'They begin with an involuntary shaking of the hands and feet. Then their lips are convulsed; next their tongue, which seems to cleave to the roof of their mouth. Then the eyes are set, staring terribly, and the whole face variously distorted. Presently they start up, and jump ten, fifteen, or twenty times together straight upward, two, three or more feet from the ground. Then they start forward, and run with amazing swiftness, two, three, or five hundred yards. Frequently they run up, like a cat, to the top of an house, and jump on the ridge of it, as on the ground. But wherever they are, they never fall, or miss their footing at all.'

Becoming worn out, they fell as dead; but on coming to themselves they were able to tell when the affection would again overtake them. Such things were not only regarded as a misfortune in themselves, it was somewhat discreditable to be affected by them. At all events we find it remarked, 'those who have the second sight count it a great misfortune.' The appearance of a person to a well-known friend was sometimes taken to be an intimation of death.

In 1766—a year which has become memorable by the publication of the *Vicar of Wakefield*—there was living at Colne a young woman who over twenty years before, while lying in bed, used to see 'persons walking up and down the room.' She herself gave Wesley this account:—

'They all used to come very near the bed, and look

upon me, but say nothing. Some of them looked very sad, and some looked very cheerful; some seemed pleased, others very angry; and these frayed me sore; especially a man and a woman of our own parish, who seemed fighting, and died soon after. None of them spoke to me but a lad about sixteen, who, a week before, died of the smallpox. I said to him, "You are dead! How did you get out of the other place?" He said, "Easily enough." I said, "Nay, I think if I was there, I should not get out so easily." He looked exceeding angry. I was frighted, and began to pray, and he vanished away. If it was ever so dark when any of them appeared, there was light all around them. This continued until I was sixteen or seventeen; but it frighted me more and more; and I was troubled because people talked about me; and many told me I was a witch. This made me cry earnestly to God to take it away from me. In a week or two it was all at an end; and I have seen nothing since.'

'One of the strangest accounts' Wesley ever met with was told him by a woman at Sunderland in 1768; and he asked, 'What pretence have I to deny well-attested facts because I cannot comprehend them?' When he remarks that 'most of the men of learning in Europe have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives' fables,' Wesley frankly adds, 'I am sorry for it'; for it means nothing less than a 'violent compliment' paid by those who believe the Bible to unbelievers. Even still stronger language is

used when it is said emphatically, 'the giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible.' Why should 'this weapon be wrested out of our hands?'

The young woman referred to had many adventures to tell of, and the following is one of them:—

'When I was between twelve and thirteen, my uncle had a lodger who was a very wicked man. One night I was sitting in my chamber, about half-hour after ten, having by accident put out my candle, when he came in, all over in a flame. I cried out, "William, why do you come in so to fright me?" He said nothing, but went away. I went after him into his room, but found he was fast asleep in bed. A day or two after he fell ill, and within the week died in raging despair.'

She had seen plenty of other strange sights, and had heard confused noises. One unearthly being whom she had encountered was 'a young man dressed in purple.' Another was a relative whom, as she said, 'I saw in the field coming swiftly towards me.' Her uncle died; but when the young woman was overtaken by illness, he came to visit her 'about eleven at night,' when 'he sat down on the bedside.' She added: 'He came every night after, at the same time, and stayed till cock-crowing. I was exceeding glad, and kept my eyes fixed upon him all the time he stayed. If I wanted drink or anything, though I did not speak or stir, he fetched it, and set it on the chair by the bedside.' Although at times unable to speak she felt no fear. Then 'every morning

when he went away, he waved his hand to me, and I heard delightful music, as if many persons were singing together.' The last appearance of this spiritual visitant was in some respects still more remarkable:—

. . . 'He was not in his usual dress; he had on a white robe, which reached down to his feet. He looked quite pleased. About one, there stood by him a person in white, taller than him, and exceeding beautiful. He came with the singing of many voices, and continued till near cock-crowing. Then my uncle smiled, and waved his hand towards me twice or thrice. They went away with inexpressibly sweet music, and I saw him no more.'

The several cases of apparitions, seen by this woman, are annotated by Wesley in that interesting way which seem to show that he accepted the whole relation as trustworthy. One passage particularly relates to a God-fearing seaman who died at sea. The time during the three hours ending with two o'clock was when he appeared, and he came several times. On the occasion of his first appearance, 'I heard one walking in my room; and every step sounded as if he was stepping in water.' The young woman added: 'He came, whatever company I was in; at church, in the preaching-house, at my class; and was only just before me, changing his posture as I changed mine. When I sat, he sat; when I kneeled, he kneeled; when I stood, he stood likewise. I would fain have spoke to him, but I could not; when I tried, my heart sank within me.' As this went on

for over two months, the woman 'pined away, not daring to tell anyone.' At length the apparition came 'without any music, and looked exceeding sad.' He drew the bed-curtains violently, and looked wistfully, 'as one quite distressed.' At length he said: 'Betsy, God forgive you for keeping me so long from my rest. Have you forgot what you promised before I went to sea,—to look to my children if I was drowned? You must stand to your word, as I cannot rest.' The two children of this man died in childhood, and he is said to have appeared before the death of each. On one memorable occasion this is what happened:—

'I asked him one or two questions, which he immediately answered; but added, "I wish you had not called me back; for now I must take something from you." He paused a little and said, "I think you can best part with the hearing of your left ear." He laid his hand upon it, and in the instant it was as deaf as a stone; and it was several years before I recovered the least hearing of it. The cock crowed as he went out of the door, and then the music ceased.'

The woman's experience was very varied, and even still more startling, when the apparition belonged to the battalions of evil instead of to the world of the redeemed.

When he was in the North in 1770, Wesley gave an opinion on a matter on which he was never accustomed to speak of in an equivocal way. A young woman at Halifax suffered from 'coldness at her feet' and convulsions; and when asked

about the disorder, a physician said that formerly it would have been called witchcraft. Why should it not still be called that? asked Wesley:—

'Because the infidels have hooted witchcraft out of the world; and the complaisant Christians, in large numbers, have joined with them in the cry. I do not so much wonder at this,—that many of these should herein talk like infidels. But I have sometimes been inclined to wonder at the pert, saucy, indecent manner wherein some of those trample upon men far wiser than themselves; at their speaking so dogmatically against what not only the whole world, heathen and Christian, believed in past ages, but thousands, learned as well as unlearned, firmly believe at this day. I instance in Dr. Smollett and Mr. Guthrie, whose manner of speaking concerning witchcraft must be extremely offensive to every sensible man who cannot give up his Bible.'

When occurrences of a startling supernatural character happened, Wesley required that they should be confirmed by trustworthy witnesses. The following came from 'a young man of good sense, and an unblamable character.' As the youth and his comrades 'all feared God,' Wesley listened to the story, and thought that 'the matter deserved a further examination,' *e.g.*:—

'Near two years ago—*i.e.* in 1770—Martin S—— and William J—— saw in a dream, two or three times repeated to each of them, a person who told them there was a large treasure hid in such a spot, three miles from Norwich, consisting of money and

plate, buried in a chest between six and eight feet deep. They did not much regard this, till each of them, when they were broad awake, saw an elderly man and woman standing by their bedside, who told them the same thing, and bade them go and dig it up between eight and twelve at night. Soon after they went; but, being afraid, took a third man with them. They began digging, at eight, and after they had dug six feet they saw the top of a coffer or chest. But presently it sank down into the earth; and there appeared over the place a large globe of bright fire, which, after some time, rose higher and higher, till it was quite out of sight. Not long after the man and woman appeared again, and said, "You spoiled all by bringing that man with you." From this time both they and Sarah and Mary J——, who live in the same house with them, have heard several times in a week delightful music for a quarter of an hour at a time. They often hear it before those persons appear; often when they do not appear.'

Wesley was particularly asked whether such appearances were those of good or evil spirits; 'but I could not resolve them.' In one instance a man fell into a pit over seventy feet deep in the dark. On the second night of his being there he dreamed that his dead wife came and 'greatly comforted him.' On the following morning a hunting party was out, when 'an hare started up just before the hounds, and was gone; no man could tell how.' While searching for the hare, a

man heard a voice below, and the captive was saved.

Now and then houses were supposed to be haunted. Early in 1783 we find that Wesley 'drank tea at Mr. A.'s in the Maze Pond, Southwark,' and the master as well as his wife 'were determined to quit the house as soon as possible, by reason of strange noises.' These occurred at all times, but chiefly at night; and it was as though 'all the tables and chairs had been thrown up and down.'

A romantic thing happened in connection with the Rebellion of 1745–46, when the Young Pretender, Charles Edward, was at the head of the rising on behalf of his father, who claimed the crown of Great Britain as James III. A certain man who adventured his all for the Stuarts was taken, he was tried for his life at Carlisle and condemned. His wife told this little story:—

'The evening before he was to die, sitting and musing in her chair, she fell fast asleep. She dreamed one came to her and said, "Go to such a part of the wall, and among the loose stones you will find a key, which you must carry to your husband." She waked; but, thinking it a common dream, paid no attention to it. Presently she fell asleep again and dreamed the very same dream. She started up, put on her cloak and hat, and went to that part of the wall, and among the loose stones found a key. Having with some difficulty procured admission into the gaol, she gave this to her husband. It opened the door of his cell, as well

as the lock of the prison door. So at midnight he escaped for life.'

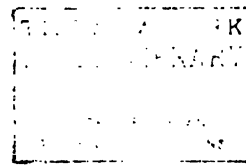
Wesley quite believed that the powers of evil showed their manifestations in various ways. He had experienced many interruptions while preaching, but something which occurred at Bristol in 1788 was almost unique. The house was full, the subject was slavery—'God shall enlarge Japhet.'

'About the middle of the discourse, while there was on every side attention still as night, a vehement noise arose, none could tell why, and shot like lightning through the whole congregation. The terror and confusion were inexpressible. You might have imagined it was a city taken by storm. The people rushed upon each other with the utmost violence; the benches were broke in pieces; and nine-tenths of the congregation appeared to be struck with the same panic. In about six minutes the storm ceased almost as suddenly as it rose; and, all being calm, I went on without the least interruption.'

To Wesley this was all owing to some preternatural influence—'Satan fought lest his kingdom should be delivered up.'

We might ask, was that age more credulous than our own, and was there more superstition? There was more ignorance, and that is the mother of all sorts of credulity and superstition in any age, our own not excepted. From his earliest days Wesley had been familiar with what he regarded as supernatural manifestations in the parsonage at Epworth, which have never been explained away.

It may also be noted that a large number of educated people of our own times believed in such manifestations quite as ardently as Wesley. We therefore give the narratives as we find them, and leave all who read them to draw their own conclusions.



JOHN WESLEY.

From a portrait painted in 1789 by William Hamilton, R.A.

(Photo by Walker & Cockerell.

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CHAPTER X

IN SCOTLAND AND ON THE BORDER

IT is generally supposed that Whitefield won greater success in Scotland than Wesley; but although the representative of Calvinistic doctrine may have been accorded a heartier welcome than the Arminian, the latter certainly left more to show for his work. In his day Dr. Adam Clarke was of opinion that, so far as Scotland was concerned, Methodism had no foothold in the country outside of Edinburgh and Glasgow that repaid for the time and money expended upon it. As a rule, however, English preachers and evangelists do not, at least at first, command popularity with Scottish hearers. It was so with C. H. Spurgeon in his early experience, although in after days that great preacher was a great favourite in the northern kingdom; and his published sermons still command a multitude of readers there. As regards Scotland, Wesley did much for the country, though far short of what he desired. Mr. Tyerman is far less of a pessimist than the commentator. 'In England, Wesley and his assistants found the masses

ignorant,' he says; 'in Scotland, they had to battle with a partially enlightened prejudice. In England, the great body of the people were without a creed; in Scotland, the people were creed-ridden. In England, the itinerant plan was not objected to; in Scotland, it had always been a bugbear.' Wesley had no doubt more sympathy with the Scots on account of their different surroundings and national prejudices than Dr. Johnson ever showed; but he quite as freely spoke his sentiments. He always felt that he was in a strange country, but not in an enemy's land; and that making progress was more uphill work than was the case south of the Border. He anticipated Dr. Johnson in noticing the lack of trees.

If he had not properly estimated the difficulties which had to be surmounted, and had not made due allowance for harder temperament and a Presbyterian education, he would not have done half that he did. Wesley had a great knowledge of human nature, and he knew which was a Scotsman's most vulnerable side. What may almost be taken as his manifesto to the nation, was given at Dundee in the early days of the wet June of 1766. He arrived in the town on the 2nd of the month, drenched with rain, but, through the clouds passing away, he was soon able to gather a congregation in the open air. Some days later, after a number of services had been held, he 'took occasion to repeat most of the plausible objections which had been made to us in Scotland.' If any man could win such people by means of that

guile which is another name for common sense, that man was Wesley. We give his own summary of what he said, and do not wonder that 'all seemed to be thoroughly satisfied.' This is the summary:—

'I love plain-dealing. Do not you? I will use it now. Bear with me. I hang out no false colours; but show you all I am, all I intend, all I do. I am a member of the Church of England: but I love good men of every Church. My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small. Therefore I always use a short private prayer when I attend the public service of God. Do not you? Why do you not? Is not this according to the Bible? I stand whenever I sing the praise of God in public. Does not the Bible give you plain precedents for this? I always kneel before the Lord my Maker, when I pray in public. I generally, in public, use the Lord's Prayer, because Christ has taught me when I pray to say, ——. I advise every preacher connected with me, whether in England or Scotland, herein to tread in my steps.'

A love of natural scenery was not fashionable in the eighteenth century; but having eyes to see, Wesley found relief or refreshment from looking upon the works of the Creator. It may indeed be questioned whether any man of his time knew so much about the British Isles from actual travel, so that what he said about sites and scenes which remain practically unaltered, is worthy of being taken notice of by modern tourists. Arthur's Seat,

with the ancient royal palace of Holyrood below, and not far from what had been the camping-ground of the Young Pretender a few years previously, just before the battle of Prestonpans, seems to have been a chief attraction of Edinburgh. As the height of Arthur's Seat is 822 feet, it is amusing to find it characterised as 'a small, rocky eminence, six or seven yards across, on the top of an exceeding high mountain, not far from Edinburgh.' The last attempt to restore the Stuarts to the throne of the two kingdoms was then of recent occurrence; and a flicker of the ancient splendour of the Scottish Court had shown itself when Charles Edward Stuart and his infatuated followers assembled at Holyrood. Wesley was old enough to remember, during his days at the Charterhouse, the rising on behalf of the Pretender before the younger adventurer was born. He would remember, too, how in after years, before the Jacobites had lost hope, one and then another, such as Ormond, Bolingbroke, and Atterbury—a patron of Wesley's brother Samuel—had escaped to France. There was nothing of the Jacobite about Wesley; for he evidently regarded the reigning House as being representative of the Protestant Succession, and he prayed fervently for King George.

Wesley had to realise that the Scots were a people difficult to reach; but the love he bore to them was that of a man who loved the nation and wished to do the people good. Still, he was made to feel that north of Newcastle was difficult ground for an evangelist to work; and even while pass-

ing through the Border parishes there occurred symptoms of the still more difficult service on before. Thus, we find it said of one place, 'but very few seemed to understand anything of the matter.' At Alnwick the Castle was being enlarged, while the gardens were turned into a paradise; but the Duke 'must leave all these and die like a common man.' At Berwick the faces of the hearers showed that they were interested, and this suggested the question, 'Is God again visiting this poor barren place?' Still referring to this district, Wesley says, 'I spoke as plain as I possibly could; but very few appeared to be at all affected. It seems to be with them, as with most in the North; they know everything and feel nothing.' At Prestonpans 'forty or fifty crept together; but they were mere stocks and stones; no more concerned than if I had talked Greek.' The best side of all this was, that the Revival altered the aspect of things for the better in Scotland, just as it had done in England.

We may note that Wesley's opinion of the Scots differed somewhat from that of Whitefield; for, being a Calvinist, the latter commanded at the outset greater prestige. In the earliest days of the Methodist Revival we find Whitefield made much of by Church leaders in Scotland. Seats for two thousand hearers, 'which are to be covered with shades and let out to the best advantage,' were provided. The modest sum of a halfpenny was made for the accommodation of a seat during one of Whitefield's open-air sermons. Great crowds were attracted; and the English preacher assisted

at an outdoor celebration of the Lord's Supper to a vast assembly. The awaking was such that before sunrise on a Midsummer morning people anxious to hear the evangelist might be seen assembling. Thus Whitefield judged of what he saw when the Spirit of God was visibly at work; years later, when Wesley travelled up and down Scotland, the surroundings were different, and Moderatism was again strong. Hence when, in 1766, Wesley visited the General Assembly of the Scottish Church, he came out and jotted down this entry in his Journal: 'I am very far from being of Mr. Whitefield's mind, who greatly commends the solemnity of this meeting. I have seen few less solemn: I am extremely shocked at the behaviour of many of the members. Had any preacher behaved so at our Conference he would have had no more place among us.' In 1766 a minister named Jardin dropped down dead in the General Assembly while the proceedings were going on; and the event was 'improved' by 'a thundering sermon in the new Kirk,' to which Wesley listened. What he saw and heard while at Edinburgh and elsewhere was the cause of his speaking 'exceeding plain' generally when in Scotland. This was thought to be urgently needed; for he added that a great part of the people 'hear much, know everything, and feel nothing.' It was noticed that the Scottish preachers gave discourses containing much of the truth; but no more likely to awaken dead souls than a performance at a theatre. It was supposed that the introduction of new

methods would produce a favourable effect; but the Scots were evidently too conservative to readily take to innovations. Persons who really had sympathy with religion, and wished well to the Revival, were not sanguine that the English methods would ever really answer with the Scottish people; others, who were content with Moderatism, descended to abuse and libel, as though they had learned to adopt the views of unconverted English clergymen. Lying descriptions of the Foundery in London became current; it was pictured as a kind of factory where runaway servant girls and lads who were not good for much were assembled in a way detrimental to the morals of both. In their enthusiasm the Wesleys were judged to be more guilty than Whitefield, because they had had more education. Their ways and their teaching were better fitted for Dissenting conventicles than for Presbyterian churches, the forms of which they despised. 'Let them carry their spirit of delusion among their brethren the Quakers,' said the *Scots Magazine*. 'Let them preach up their election and reprobation doctrines among the Calvinists; and their solifidian tenets among the Antinomians. Let not such bold movers of sedition, and ring-leaders of the rabble, to the disgrace of their order, be regularly admitted into those pulpits which they have taken with multitude and with tumult, or, as ignominiously, by stealth.'

Wesley evidently thought that the Scots were too much disposed to take extreme views, and sometimes to express them in too strong a manner.

Knox is, of course, the typical Scottish Reformer; but Wesley seems to have regarded him as having been far removed from the meekness and charity which add force to any great movement. Apologists for Knox have excused him as a rough spirit for rough times; but Wesley would not have allowed that violent treatment was ever necessary. Wesley's notion about such things was emphatic: 'The work of God does not, cannot, need the work of the devil to forward it. And a calm even spirit goes through rough work far better than a furious one. Although, therefore, God did use, at the time of the Reformation, some sour, over-bearing, passionate men, yet He did not use them *because* they were such, but notwithstanding they were so. And there is no doubt He would have used them much more had they been of an humbler and milder spirit.'

Wesley might not see all things as the Scottish people saw them; but he no doubt advanced in popular favour in proportion as he became more fully understood. As he passes through the country he jots down things which show what entertaining books of travel adventure he could have produced had that been the object in view. Thus, on a certain day at the end of April 1761, 'we came to Solway Firth'; and on hearing that it was not possible to cross the water, Wesley naturally 'resolved to try,' and, as he expected, 'got over well.' Having conquered that difficulty, there were more interesting adventures on before. 'Having lost ourselves but twice or thrice in one of the most difficult roads I ever saw, we came to

Moffat in the evening.' The town was then quite insignificant as compared with its present size, which represents a century's growth of a place which has since become famous for its mineral and sulphurous waters, and which we of to-day associate with 'Ossian,' Macpherson, and Burns. The natural waters were known in Wesley's day; but, as he stayed only one night, there was little time for looking round. On the following morning the evangelist and his attendant 'rode partly over the mountains, partly with mountains on either hand, between which was a clear winding river, and about four in the afternoon reached Edinburgh.' The weather being extremely cold for the season, he preached within doors, when 'some of the reputable hearers cried out in amaze, Why, this is sound doctrine!'

Going onward, Wesley, who seems always to have shown more courage than the ferrymen whose service he needed, had further difficulties with the boatmen, who said that the wind was too high to attempt to cross to Dundee. Going on to Aberdeen, a profound impression appears to have been made. When a message was sent to 'the Principal and Regent to desire leave to preach in the College-close,' this was not only readily given, the itinerant preacher was invited to avoid the rain by using the Hall. On the Sunday following a vast assembly was addressed in the College-close, and twenty members were added to the Society—'Fair blossoms! But how many of these will bring forth fruit?'

The work was continued at five o'clock on the Monday morning; but having some leisure at noon, Wesley 'took a walk to the King's College in old Aberdeen,' a building having 'three sides of a square, handsomely built, not unlike Queen's College in Oxford.' In the Hall were found 'a large party of ladies with several gentlemen,' who for some time 'looked and spoke to one another'; and then one of the sterner sex came near to explain that they were unable to hear on the previous evening on account of the crowd, but would Mr. Wesley speak to them there and then? Of course he complied, and the Word was with power—'It fell as dew on the tender grass.' The professors of Marischal College were very friendly; and in his own house the Principal showed 'no stiffness at all, but the easy good-breeding of a man of sense and learning.' Wesley's fame had preceded him; 'the eagerness of the people made them ready to trample each other under foot.' The Principal and the professors were supposed to be among the audience. As he loved fresh air, Wesley 'set all the windows open; but the Hall, notwithstanding, was as hot as a bagnio.' Nothing could exceed the cordiality of his reception at Aberdeen when George III. was in his youth; and Wesley gratefully remarks: 'I have scarce seen such a set of ministers in any town of Great Britain and Ireland.' Still going north, he next halted at Sir Archibald Grant's mansion, near Monymusk, the borderland of the Highlands. Is not this a delightful picture of the country life

of a Scottish gentleman in the sixties of the eighteenth century?—

'It lies in a fruitful and pleasant valley, much of which is owing to Sir Archibald's improvements, who has ploughed up abundance of waste ground and planted some millions of trees. His stately old house is surrounded by gardens and rows of trees, with a clear river on one side. And about a mile from his house he has laid out a small valley into walks and gardens, on one side of which the river runs. On each side rises a steep mountain; one rocky and bare, the other covered with trees, row above row, to the very top.'

At the service in the church, the pews were nearly all occupied, and an anthem was as well sung as might have been the case in any English cathedral. In places likely and otherwise, the Word seems to have gone forth with good effect; and, when applied, the Gospel which Wesley preached was as well suited to the Scots as to the English or Irish.

Sir Archibald Grant seems to have handsomely entertained Wesley whenever the opportunity occurred, and he appears also to have been a man whom the Methodist leader held in high esteem. Speaking of Sir Archibald three years later than the visit just referred to, he says:—

'I have seldom seen a more agreeable place. The house is an old castle, which stands on a little hill, with a delightful prospect all four ways; and the hospitable master has left nothing undone to make it more agreeable. He showed me all his

improvements, which are very considerable in every branch of husbandry. In his garden many things were more forward than at Aberdeen, yea, or Newcastle. And how is it that none but one Highland gentleman has discovered that we have a tree in Britain, as easily raised as an ash, the wood of which is just as fine a red as mahogany, namely, the laburnum? I defy any mahogany to exceed the chairs which he has lately made of this.'

Wesley had a keen eye to detect natural advantages; and he was always delighted when, with the fear of God in their hearts, the people turned them to best account. Then, after bidding adieu to Sir Archibald Grant at or about Midsummer 1764, to pass through 'the pleasant and fertile county of Murray to Elgin,' the novelty and extreme charm of the scene must have distracted such a reading traveller as the Methodist leader from his book. 'I never suspected before that there was any such country as this near an hundred and fifty miles beyond Edinburgh,' he remarked; 'a country which is supposed to have generally six weeks more sunshine in a year than any part of Great Britain.'

Coming to Elgin and its picturesque surroundings, the remains of the mediæval Cathedral were striking evidence of the grandeur to which the church attained in the most corrupt ecclesiastical age. Wesley refers to the ruins as those of 'a noble Cathedral; the largest that I remember to have seen in the kingdom.' From the limestone

and sandstone rocks, which since those days have ceased to be worked, material was to come for the construction of the present London Bridge. With what mingled emotion of pain and curiosity would such a Churchman as Wesley look upon ruins which had such a tragic history as those of Elgin Cathedral. The stately structure, which rose early in the thirteenth century, was destroyed by fire and rebuilt before that century closed. 'The Wolf of Badenoch' again fired and shattered the church in 1390; and after twenty-five years had been spent in repairing this damage, it was destined to be unroofed at the time of the Reformation; and still later, to be greatly injured by the Covenanters. Posterity might have gained much that would have been valued in these days if such an adviser as Wesley could have sat at the Council Board of the sixteenth-century Scottish Reformers.

Passing on through Keith and Strathbogie, a chief thing to note was the improvement which was coming over the scene through the development of the linen manufacture. Here is a word-picture of life in the far North in 1764:—

'All the country from Fochabers to Strathbogie has little houses scattered up and down; and not only the valleys, but the mountains themselves, are improved with the utmost care. There want only more trees to make them more pleasant than most of the mountains in England. The whole family at our inn, eleven or twelve in number, gladly joined with us in prayer at night. Indeed, so they did at every inn where we lodged; for among all

the sins they have imported from England, the Scots have not yet learned, at least, not the common people, to scoff at sacred things.'

A somewhat graphic description of the Lord's Supper celebration at Kinghorn would, at that time, be read with curiosity as a sketch of the religious manners and customs of a far-off country. Wesley was no doubt as interested as he knew his readers would be, but he still says, with characteristic ingenuousness, 'I did not admire the manner of administration.' There were tables in the aisles, each of which accommodated between thirty and forty persons. 'How much more simple, as well as more solemn, is the service of the Church of England!'

While the outlying districts of Old Scotland were so lovely in those days, what was Edinburgh, the capital of the country, like in those far distant times? On one occasion, after riding one hundred and thirty miles in two May days, Wesley came to Edinburgh. On the Sunday following he designed to preach in the open air near the Infirmary; 'but some of the managers would not suffer it, so that I preached in our room, morning and evening, even to the rich and honourable.'

On the following day he 'took leave of Edinburgh for the present.' There seems to be no doubt that the reception and entertainment accorded had evidently been so much to his liking, that he was hoping to renew his acquaintance with the Scots on another occasion. We are interested in the allusions to the Scottish capital and its

condition during the early years of the reign of George III. The contrast between the then condition of any British town, and its condition now, is speaking evidence of the great progress which has been made in those things which contribute to health and enjoyment of life, *e.g.*:—

'The situation of the city on a hill shelving down on both sides, as well as to the east, with the stately castle upon a craggy rock on the west, is inexpressibly fine. And the main street, so broad and finely paved, with the lofty houses on either hand (many of them seven or eight storeys high), is far beyond any in Great Britain. But how can it be suffered that all manner of filth should still be thrown even into the street continually? Where are the Magistracy, the Gentry, the Nobility of the land? Have they no concern for the honour of their nation? How long shall the capital city of Scotland, yea, and the chief street of it, stink worse than a common sewer? Will no lover of his country, or of decency and common sense, find a remedy for this?'

Twelve years afterwards, James Boswell, who was a resident at Edinburgh, welcomed Dr. Johnson to the Scottish capital, and the doctor's remark to his host on alighting from the coach quite agreed with Wesley's description of the state of the High Street. In the year 1779 Boswell's mania for becoming acquainted with all kinds of famous people prompted him to call at Wesley's lodging at Edinburgh with a letter of introduction from Dr. Johnson, when he was 'very

politely received.' The talk was of a ghost said to have appeared at Newcastle; but the evidence for which Johnson thought to be insufficient. In that case the famous satellite of the lexicographer very naturally came away also unconvinced; but many will say that Wesley himself was too credulous in regard to alleged supernatural appearances.

His reference to Holyrood shows that Wesley took a more lenient view of Mary Stuart's character than some of our modern historians :—

'Holyrood House, at the entrance of Edinburgh, the ancient palace of the Scottish kings, is a noble structure. . . . One side of it is a picture-gallery, wherein are pictures of all the Scottish kings, and an original one of the celebrated Queen Mary: It is scarce possible for any who looks at this to think her such a monster as some have painted her; nor indeed for any who considers the circumstances of her death, equal to that of an ancient martyr.'

We find Wesley venturing to preach at a five-o'clock morning service at Musselburgh. Thence he rode on to Haddington, where the famous, or even wonderful, John Brown was then stationed; and one would like to have seen some account of a meeting between two such men as the Founder of Methodism and the quondam Scottish peasant, who, besides his knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, knew nine modern languages. At the time of Wesley's visit the weather was wet, but instead of turning into the church he 'preached between nine and ten in Provost Dickson's parlour.'

As he travelled southward towards the Border

country, one or two things happened deserving of notice. On May 14 he preached on the Bowling-Green at Berwick-on-Tweed, and in the evening at Alnwick. Being urged to give the people at Warksworth a sermon also, he consented, and adds: 'A post-chaise came for me to the door; in which I found one waiting for me whom, in the bloom of youth, mere anguish of soul had brought to the gates of death.' Suitable counsel was given; and 'she did feel the next day something she could not comprehend, and knew not what to call it.' Wesley then remarks: 'Ah! thou child of affliction, of sorrow and pain, hath Jesus found thee out also. And He is able to find and bring back thy husband, as far as he has wandered out of the way.'

In addition to the remains of what may have been an exceedingly fine old castle, we have a reference to what is supposed to have been a hermitage:—

'On the other side, towards the bottom of a steep hill covered with wood, is an ancient chapel, with several apartments adjoining to it, hewn in the solid rock. The windows, the pillars, the communion-table, and several other parts are entire. But where are the inhabitants? Gathered to their fathers; some of them, I hope, in Abraham's bosom, till rocks and rivers and mountains flee away, and the dead, small and great, stand before God.'

Going forward, he never despaired of his message; but still, halting at Alemouth, he calls

it 'a poor barren place.' A company of soldiers, on their way to the war in Germany, were addressed in the market-place at Alnwick, when it was hoped that they would put their Christian armour on.

Like all who live to extreme old age, Wesley lived to see many of the friends of earlier days pass away. This was the case in Scotland as elsewhere. During repeated visits he was greatly encouraged by his experience at Inverness, where the town ministers accorded him the warmest of welcomes and granted him the use of the High Kirk. 'Were it only for this day, I should not have regretted the riding an hundred miles,' he once remarked. Then he added: 'Observe the remarkable behaviour of the whole congregation after service. Neither man, woman, nor child spoke one word all the way down the main street. Indeed, the seriousness of the people is the less surprising when it is considered that for at least an hundred years this town has had such a succession of pious ministers as very few in Great Britain have known.' He considered Inverness to be the fourth town in Scotland in regard to size; and 'the people in general speak very good English.'

Many years later, or in June 1789, he found that Inverness presented quite an altered outlook, and one that was in all respects more discouraging. The good pastors, Mackenzie and Fraser, had gone to rest. 'The three present ministers are of another kind; so that I have no more place in the Kirk; and the wind and rain would not permit me

to preach on the Green. Being now informed (which I did not suspect before) that the town was uncommonly given to drunkenness, I used the utmost plainness of speech; and I believe not without effect.'

It is noteworthy that Wesley spent part of the last summer of his life in Scotland; but unhappily part of the MS. of the Diary relating to that time has been lost. He returned to Aberdeen on June 25. 'I took a solemn farewell of a crowded audience,' he says. 'If I should be permitted to see them again, well; if not, I have delivered my own soul.' Hardly more than eight months later, he also had entered into the rest he had for so long anticipated with thrilling joy.

No doubt memories of Wesley in Scotland are still dear to many Scottish hearts. His love for the country and the people prompted him to preach the Gospel there; and hence to the Scottish people, as well as to others in the British Isles, he being dead yet speaketh.

CHAPTER XI

WESLEY IN IRELAND

IN our account of the characteristics of the man John Wesley himself, many things not touched upon might have been mentioned, all of which would have served to bring out in bolder relief his idiosyncrasies. Thus, for example, he harboured no more admiration for lawyers and their ways than he did for the surgeons of his day and their empirical practices. Referring to Liverpool, he wrote in 1766: 'I looked over the wonderful Deed which was lately made here: On which I observed, 1. It takes up three large skins of parchment, and could not cost less than six guineas; whereas our own Deed, transcribed by a friend, would not have cost six shillings. 2. It was verbose beyond all sense and reason; and withal so ambiguously worded, that one passage only might find matter for a suit of ten or twelve years in Chancery.' Even in the eighteenth century, a physician might be found to condemn the most moderate use of intoxicants; but as opposed to such total abstinence, Wesley speaks of wine as 'one of the noblest cordials in nature.'

He thought it to be even dangerous for elderly people to give up the moderate use of stimulants to take to water-drinking. He saw the evil of excess, and by all means he discouraged the use of ardent spirits, which became a great curse in the time of George II. Perhaps nothing so vividly depicts contemporary drinking customs as some of Hogarth's pictures; and while looking at these, we realise that the Revival was indeed a temperance reformation.

But in this chapter the aim will be to give facts and incidents connected with Wesley's work in Ireland, thus showing the social and religious condition of the Irish people in the eighteenth century.

In the year 1749 George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, the first philosophical writer of his time, published his *Word to the Wise*, the aim being to urge the Roman Catholic clergy to stimulate the peasants of Ireland to greater industry. The good Bishop thought that he detected in the Irish common people 'a remarkable antipathy to labour,' and to this cause he put down the ills from which they suffered. 'No country is better qualified to furnish the necessaries of life, and yet no people are worse provided,' he says; and then he thus depicts the ordinary peasant class as they were one hundred and fifty years ago:—

'The house of an Irish peasant is the cave of poverty; within you see a pot and a little straw; without a heap of children tumbling on the dunghill. Their fields and gardens are a lively counterpart

of Solomon's description in the Proverbs: "I went (saith the wise king) by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down." In every road the ragged ensigns of poverty are displayed; you often meet caravans of poor, whole families in a drove, without clothes to cover, or bread to feed them; both which might be easily procured by moderate labour. They are encouraged in this vagabond life by the miserable hospitality they meet with in every cottage, whose inhabitants expect the same kind reception in their turn when they become beggars themselves; beggary being the last refuge of these improvident creatures.'

He draws a graphic picture of the dirty habits of the people, the reference being to the southern part of the country more especially. 'Our poor Irish are wedded to dirt upon principle.' It is added, 'Such is their laziness, that rather than work they will cherish a distemper. This I know to be true, having seen more than one instance wherein the second nature so far prevailed over the first, that sloth was preferred to health.' These extracts are merely given to show how the most famous Irish bishop of his time viewed this matter, his pamphlet being written for philanthropic purposes. It may be added, however, that the Roman Catholic clergy recognised the justness of Berkeley's views, and promised to follow his directions. 'In every page it contains a proof of

the author's extensive charity,' it was remarked in a letter from the Dublin clergy; 'his views are only towards the public good.'

In one of his Irish tours, in June 1765, Wesley took shelter from rain in a cabin in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, and found that the inmates represented four generations. 'They seemed much frighted,' he remarks; 'but one of our company, who spoke Irish, soon took away their fears. We then sang a hymn and went to prayer. They gaped and stared abundantly; and when we went away, after giving them a small piece of money, followed us with a thousand blessings.' The sight of such a cabin might have reminded the travellers that at that time the population of Ireland was increasing at an alarming rate, which portended famine and disaster. The population was then well under three million; but forty years later, or in the opening of the nineteenth century, the total was not far short of five and a half millions.

In regard to the ancient history of the country, Wesley did not believe that the people were civilised until they came under the influence of the English—'Much less that Ireland was, in the seventh or eighth century, the grand seat of learning; that it had many famous colleges, in one of which only, Armagh, there were seven thousand students. All this, with St. Patrick's converting thirty thousand at one sermon, I rank with the history of Bel and the Dragon.'

In many respects the observations of Wesley

closely correspond with those of Berkeley; especially do they do so in regard to the condition of certain Charter Schools. Take that at Castlebar as he found it in 1773—'No gate to the courtyard, a large chasm in the wall, heaps of rubbish before the house-door, broken windows in abundance; the whole a picture of slothfulness, nastiness, and desolation! I did not dream there were any inhabitants, till, the next day, I saw about forty boys and girls walking from church.' The scholars were apparently out for exercise without either master or mistress in attendance, and their tattered, dirty, or generally unkempt condition was altogether in keeping with the aspect of their schoolhouse as described. The Charter School at Ballinrobe was conducted on similar lines. 'I went thither about five in the afternoon,' remarks Wesley, 'but found no master or mistress. Seven or eight boys, and nine or ten girls (the rest being rambling abroad), dirty and ragged enough, were left to the care of a girl half a head taller than the rest. She led us through the house.' For some fifteen boys there were three beds, and for nineteen girls five beds; the schoolroom itself, corresponding to this limited accommodation, being 'not much bigger than a small closet.' A veritable hedge school was almost to be preferred to this; but what hope could be entertained of a peasantry who were not better housed than uncivilised savages? During one of his earliest visits to Ireland, Wesley was struck with the savage-like outlook of the common mode of life: 'For no light can come into the earth or

straw-built cavern, on the master and his cattle, but at one hole; which is both window, chimney, and door.'

What will strike readers in general as one of the most remarkable letters ever addressed by a great Christian leader to one of his subordinates, was sent by Wesley to Hugh Saunderson in 1769, when the latter was engaged in service in the Armagh district. The preacher was to 'avoid all laziness, sloth, indolence.' Then the preacher was to 'avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness,' etc. Under the third head it was found necessary to say, 'Whatever clothes you wear, let them be whole: no rents, no tatters, no rags.' It was even necessary to add, 'Clean yourself of lice.' 'Cure yourselves and your family of the itch.' Both tobacco and snuff were proscribed; and, as dram-drinking was so general in Ireland, spirits were to be refused. As regarded snuff: 'I suppose no other nation in Europe is in such vile bondage to this silly, nasty, dirty custom as the Irish are,' remarked Wesley; 'but let the Christians be in this bondage no longer.'

In regard to the county towns of Ireland, Wesley's idea was that they were altogether remarkable for the reason that half a dozen, including Donegal, would not have matched Islington in point of size. Then he asks the question, 'Is not this owing in part to the fickleness of the nation, who seldom like anything long, and are so continually seeking new habitations, as well as new fashions, and new trifles of every kind?' He

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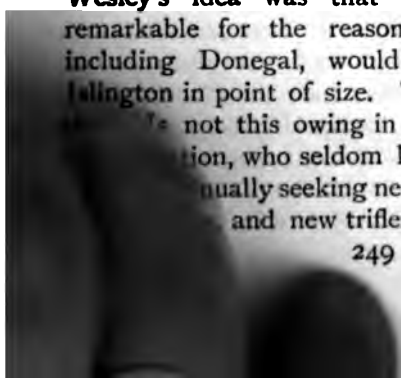
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and new trifles of every kind?' He

was not at all in love with the language, thinking that many of its characteristics made it intolerably difficult to an Englishman.

He gives many particulars relating to the county towns, and in 1760 he seems to have had a vision of what might have been when he took notice of three colonies of Germans in the Limerick district. 'I suppose three such towns are scarce to be found again in England or Ireland,' he says. 'There is no cursing or swearing, no Sabbath-breaking, no drunkenness, no alehouse in any of them.' The contrast to the squalor and misery of the mud-cabin on a potato-plot swarming with children was altogether striking. So, indeed, was the contrast between North and South in 1756: 'No sooner did we enter Ulster than we observed the difference. The ground was cultivated just as in England; and the cottages not only neat, but with doors, chimneys, and windows.' This seems to tally with the picture drawn by Bishop Berkeley.

As he passed through the country during successive tours, Wesley closely observed the characteristics of many of the towns at which he halted. Glenarm, a small seaport and watering-place, County Antrim, one hundred and thirty-seven miles from Dublin, was a place in which Methodist preaching began in 'an uncommon manner.' A travelling preacher named John Smith, who died soon after, overtook a young lady travelling with a servant, learned that though the town was a wicked place there was one good man there—William Hunter. Smith was emboldened to ride

straight to the house of the latter, and found one of the man's daughters engaged in the house. 'Betty, take my horse to an inn,' said the preacher, 'and tell everyone you meet, A gentleman at our house has good news to tell you at seven o'clock.' The result was a full congregation, and during nine days Smith preached eighteen sermons to people who apparently had ears to hear. Although he had but threepence, Smith still asked what he had to pay, and then found that a friend had discharged his debt, and would continue to do so if he stayed for a month longer. The Gospel could not fail to make progress in the country when there were evangelists of this mettle to make it known.

Perhaps the way in which Wesley lived down opposition was more apparent in Ireland than elsewhere, while in his old age Cork distinguished itself in this respect more than any other Irish town. On a certain morning in May 1787 'a gentleman invited me to breakfast with my old antagonist Father O'Leary,' and Wesley was pleasingly disappointed to find that this priest was not 'the stiff queer man that I expected.' The behaviour of the Mayor, 'an upright, sensible man,' was also such as became a magistrate who was 'diligently employed from morning to night in doing all the good he can.' It had been the custom for the Corporation to have two entertainments in each year, which cost £100 in each instance, but through the influence of the Mayor this money came to be used for the relief of indigent freemen and their wives and

families. He also undertook other service of a philanthropic kind, so that Wesley naturally asked when English mayors would copy such an example. 'He led me through the Mayoralty-House,—a very noble and beautiful structure. The dining-room and the ball-room are magnificent, and shame the Mansion-House in London by their situation; commanding the whole river, the fruitful hills on every side, and the meadows running between them.' There was at that time in Cork a House of Industry wherein nearly two hundred were lodged, the master being 'a pious man, and a member of our Society.'

In 1765 the people of Derry were found to be strangely honest. 'None scruples to leave his house open all day, and the door only on the latch at night. Such a thing as theft is scarce heard of at Derry; no one has the least suspicion of it.' There was one considerable drawback to this otherwise enviable state of things—'The inhabitants never suspect themselves to be sinners.' His further experience must have made it almost seem to Wesley that honesty was a feature of the Irish character in a greater degree than was the case elsewhere. Thus, he left a guinea on a bookseller's counter at Dublin, and had the money returned to him; but he would hardly have expected such a thing to have happened either in London or Bristol. In our day, however, neither our metropolis nor the western city would, in this respect, be behind the Irish capital.

The Moravian settlements in Ireland presented

quite a sunny contrast to the low condition of the common people; but whether on the Continent or in the British Isles, the Moravians were quite phenomenal as regarded their marvellous lack of hospitality. Wesley thought that this was altogether reprehensible. On one occasion, when far from home, he called on an old friend, whom he had not seen for over forty years, and was not asked to take any refreshment. 'Is not this a shameful way?' it is asked. 'Is it not a way that a Jew, a Mahometan, yea, an honest heathen, would be ashamed of?'

Of course the degrading effects of Romanism and priestcraft in the eighteenth century were similar to what they are at the present time. In the earlier days of his preaching in Ireland, when he was himself not more than somewhat over forty years of age, Wesley found that to the people in general the Gospel was 'strange news to them.' 'I would fain be with you, but I dare not,' very frankly remarked one ingenuous man, who no doubt represented a multitude of others; 'for now I have all my sins forgiven for four shillings a year; and this could not be in *your* Church.' Nevertheless it seemed to be true that persons of all ages, 'except a few of the great vulgar,' were glad to hear the Gospel. Even a Roman Catholic priest would, on receiving a book, say '*God bless you*, earnestly repeated twice or thrice.' In some respects the Roman Catholics were in a more hopeful condition than others who professed to be more enlightened. 'O what a harvest might be in Ireland,' said Wesley

in 1750, did not the poor Protestants hate Christianity worse than either Popery or Heathenism.' The fact is, however, that in the course of his long life Wesley was favoured to see some striking reformations. Even Cork, where he had been treated with such distinguished honour, had shown a very different temper about forty years previously, when a miscreant named Butler, being favoured by the Mayor, headed the mob, and committed the most abominable outrages. The whole was encouraged by an unprincipled, or even criminal, Grand Jury, who in their presentment characterised Charles Wesley and other preachers as persons of ill-fame and common vagabonds. Nor was a Grand Jury of this mettle by any means peculiar to Cork. In 1773 similar things happened at Enniskillen: 'Therefore it is to these honourable gentlemen I am obliged for all the insults and outrage I met with,' said Wesley; 'but, meantime, where is liberty, civil or religous?'

He was drawn towards the common people more than he was towards those above them. 'The poor in Ireland in general are well behaved: All the ill-breeding is among the well-dressed people.' It may be feared that this remark retains some of its truth at the present day. From time to time Wesley continued to note this characteristic of the Irish. 'I was much surprised,' he once remarked after preaching in the court-house at Clonmell; 'I know not when I have seen so well-dressed and ill-behaved a congregation; but I was told it was the way they behaved at church. Pity then that

they do not turn Papists.' The common people would behave well in the open air, even with 'the rain pouring down all the time.'

The state of the roads tried the patience as well as the nerves of adventurous travellers in a greater degree than might be the case at present. The route to Newry in 1787 is characterised as horrible. It was wonderful that anyone could 'prefer the Irish roads to the English.' Whether for horses, carriages, or travellers, there was nothing to come up to English roads made of good gravel. As for the Irish highways, 'the huge unbroken stones, of which they are generally made, are enough to break any carriage to pieces.' A more luxurious, even 'a most elegant way of travelling,' in the Green Isle a hundred and twenty years ago, was by canal-boat. On the way to Prosperous from Dublin in 1785, Wesley preached on board to quite an interesting congregation, and found the mode of transit 'little inferior to that of the tract-skuits in Holland.'

A vein of genial wit and humour seems to be common to the Irish temperament, and this trait in the national character may partly account for modes of life common among all classes. As has already been shown, a philanthropic itinerant like Wesley was painfully struck with the squalid and poverty-stricken condition of the peasants; but there were phases of life still more marvellous pertaining to the classes above them. Thus, after 'the hottest day I ever felt in Ireland . . . I was desired to see the house of an eminent scholar

near the town.' Wesley was then (1758) at Lurgan, and he goes on to describe with his usual graphic force the establishment of the eccentric savant:—

'The door into the yard we found nailed up; but we got in at a gap which was stopped with thorns. I took the house, at first, for a very old barn, but was assured that he had built it within five years; not indeed by any old, vulgar model, but purely to his own taste. The walls were part mud, part brick, part stone, and part bones and wood. There were four windows, but no glass in any, lest the pure air should be kept out. The house had two storeys, but no staircase and no door. Into the upper floor we went by a ladder, through one of the lower windows into the lower floor, which was about four foot high. This floor had three rooms;—one three-square, the second had five sides, the third I know not how many. I give a particular description of this wonderful edifice to illustrate that great truth: There is no folly too great even for a man of sense, if he resolve to follow his own imagination!'

While such an instance was depressing, it would occasionally occur in connection with those stately ancestral homes which are usually considered to be a chief attraction of any country. Lord Donegal had ranked as one of the most wealthy of Irish peers, and he had a magnificent seat, 'surrounded by large and elegant gardens,' at Carrick. His only son was an idiot, however, and the next heir cared nothing about the place—'So

the roof of the house is fallen in, and the horses and sheep which feed in the gardens make wild work with the parterres and curious trees which the old lord so carefully planted.' Now and then the great itinerant evangelist would receive an invitation to partake of refreshment, or to lodge at some such great house; but while he never failed to appreciate such attention, he realised that his mission was chiefly to the poor. Among his more distinguished adventures after he had lived down opposition, was to dine with distinguished persons whose houses he had to pass on the road; and those who thus entertained the leader and his preachers indeed represented all sorts and conditions of men. Many delightful passages in his Diary thus reveal to us Wesley in the sunshine of generous hospitality—a cheery contrast to some of his harder experiences.

Of course anything in the way of luxury would be accepted by the preachers as a pleasant surprise; all expected to fare hard in a general way as regarded actual travelling, as well as in lodging and diet. Wesley himself never expected or wished to fare better than his preachers. Thus, at Terryhugan a room had been expressly put up for the accommodation of the preachers, and in 1758 this is described as being 'three yards long, two-and-a-quarter broad, and six foot high. The walls, floor, and ceiling are mud; and we had a clean chaff bed.' In addressing the people, he had a rock behind and the grass in front on which the congregation sat. 'Thence we retired to our hut,

and found it true, Under a lowly roof a poor man may have more real enjoyment of life than even monarchs and their friends.' In the case of all preachers, from Wesley himself downwards, travelling in those days was always a very chequered experience. To be 'wet through from head to foot' on arrival at a town was no uncommon experience, but when persons are acclimatised to such adventures they suffer no inconvenience.

Many things which are mentioned in a more or less vivid way afford insight into the everyday social life of the country. Thus a soldier showing a fancy for a cane carried by a civilian whom he met in the street, snatches it from the man's hand, and on the outrage being resented the soldier is reinforced by several of his armed comrades, who maltreat the people. Then the following shows how the custom of duelling was maintained in and about Limerick at Midsummer 1758:—

'On Sunday evening last two officers were playing at dice, when they quarrelled about a lewd woman. This occasioned a challenge from Mr. I., which the other would fain have declined. But he would not be denied; and was so bent upon it that he would not go to bed. About three in the morning they went out with their seconds to the island. Mr. B. proposed firing at twelve yards' distance; but Mr. I. said, "No, no; six is enough." So they kissed one another (poor farce), and before they were five paces asunder both fired at the same instant. The ball went into Mr. I.'s breast, who turned round twice or thrice and fell. He was

carried home, made his will, and about three in the afternoon died like a man of honour!'

Wesley was a keen observer of what he understood to be the judgments of the Lord. On one occasion a gentleman who was visiting at a mansion in County Clare, 'finding they were going to family prayers, ran away in all haste, swearing he would have none of their swaddling prayers.' A few days later he was overtaken by illness, one physician after another was summoned, but they could only say, 'He is a dead man.' He soon after died in despair.

When we find Wesley, at the opening of the reign of George III., referring to Ireland as having been 'always so thinly inhabited,' he shows that he had no adequate notion of the rapidity with which the population was then advancing. He sums up the things which had told against them, however, such as murder not being a capital offence, their having no benefit from English law, the injustice of the English rule, and long-continued civil war. Then 'when they were multiplied during a peace of forty years, from 1600 to 1641, the general massacre, with the ensuing war, again thinned their numbers; not so few as a million of men, women, and children being destroyed in four years' time.' He thus took the most sombre view of rebellion, for which Cromwell exacted severest penalties. He apparently had no idea other than that the population was still diminishing; for he found that large numbers were leaving the country through lack of employment, the gentry showing

a strong disposition to turn arable land into pasture, and so to throw large numbers out of employment. Connaught was supposed not to have half as many inhabitants as had been found there eighty years before.

An account of a rare adventure, or any example of exceptional ingenuity, at once attracted Wesley's attention, and his habit of relating such things help to make his Diary one of the most interesting things of the kind in existence. In his early Irish tours he became acquainted with a watchmaker at Lurgan named Miller, who had partly worked out a piece of mechanism 'the like of which all allowed was not to be seen in Europe.' A case, having a curtain in front, contained 'the figure of an old man,' a clock being on the opposite side of the room. When the clock struck the old man drew aside the curtain, stepped forward, turned his head 'as if looking round on the company,' and then spoke of another hour being gone. The figure awakened so much curiosity that the inventor 'was in danger of being ruined,' through neglecting business while attending to visitors. The busy inventor worked the speaking figure merely as recreation; but more than ten years later Wesley found that Miller hoped to produce a second figure, 'which would not only speak, but sing hymns alternately with an articulate voice.' Wesley seems to have become impatient when he thought of such a master genius being able only to devote leisure hours to such service—'How amazing is it that no man of fortune enables him to give all his

time to the work.' What lasting benefit might not such a man have conferred on his country had he given attention to medicine instead of mechanics. We find that in the last century in Ireland, fashion had about as much to do with medicine as with clothes. As an amateur doctor, Wesley was of more real service to suffering patients than all the professionals they might be able to summon. When he asked them concerning the remedies already used, he generally found that they had most conscientiously followed the fashion.—'Now the grand fashionable medicine for twenty diseases (who would imagine it?) is mercury sublimate! Why is it not an halter, or a pistol? They would cure a little more speedily.'

A tragic adventure which happened in connection with a soldier, showed to what a low state of degradation some had fallen who were raised above the peasantry. There was a poor woman whose rent lagged behind until she owed what was to her the formidable sum of £14. When by much painful effort she contrived to carry half of this sum to the landlord, the man would not take anything less than the full amount; but nevertheless he 'detained her in talk till evening.' Having a car, she then set out on the return journey. Before reaching home, a weary soldier was taken up; and when the house was reached, this man begged to be allowed to sit by the fire until morning, the nearest town being some miles away.

'She told him she durst not suffer it, as hers was a lone house, and there was none in it but

herself and her girl: But at last she agreed that he should lie in the girl's bed, and she and the girl would lie together. At midnight two men who had blackened their faces broke into the house and demanded her money. She said, "Then let me go into the next room and fetch it." Going in, she said to the soldier, "You have requited me well for my kindness by bringing your comrades to rob my house." He asked, "Where are they?" She said, "In the next room." He started up and ran thither. The men ran away with all speed. He fired after them, and shot one dead; who, being examined, appeared to be her landlord! So that a soldier was sent to protect an innocent woman and punish a hardened villain.'

In the days of the Georges the practices of so-called forestallers in the markets awakened much popular resentment, and forestalling was an offence at common law. In the fifties of the eighteenth century the county of Sligo was 'the best peopled that I have seen in the kingdom.' The villages were less than a mile apart, and the fertile country was cultivated even to the hilltops. Still, James's Town, once an important place, was 'now an heap of ruins.' Passing on through Carrick and Boyle, it was found that 'the mob had been in motion all day,' but 'their business was only with the forestallers of the market, who had bought up all the corn far and near to starve the poor, and load a Dutch ship which lay at the quay.' Under such irritating conditions the behaviour of Irishmen was better than that of their English

neighbours would have been. The corn was brought into the market, it was there 'sold for the owners at the common price,' all being done with 'calmness and composure,' no one being either threatened or hurt.

Perhaps the most effective thing to have brought about a halt in these revolutionary proceedings would have been a sermon by Wesley in the open air; for at Clara, a few days later, the great evangelist found that it was market-day; but 'the poor people eagerly flocked from the market; and there was no buying or selling till I concluded.' This willingness of the peasantry to hear the Gospel was always cheering; but the spirits of the itinerant would be damped by signs of decline or of actual ruin. Thus, after preaching at Aghrim in April 1775, Wesley went to see the seat of Lord Eyre, being greeted by an inscription over the door, 'Welcome to the house of liberty.' The house was found to have once been a noble place. 'The staircase is grand; and so are two or three of the rooms. In the rest of the house, as well as in the ruinous outhouses, gardens, and fishponds, the owner seemed to say to every beholder, "All this profiteth me nothing."' Elsewhere he comes to a castle having what had once been enchanting gardens, a former owner who had taken great delight in them having procured rare trees from all parts of the country. It was very characteristic of the Ireland of that day when those who came after were of a different temperament—'So all is now swiftly running to ruin.'

Still more interesting — being still eminently characteristic of the people—was the Parliament House at Dublin in the last days of its being used for legislative purposes, or about three years before Wesley's death:—

'The House of Lords far exceeds that at Westminster; and the Lord-Lieutenant's throne as far exceeds that miserable throne (so-called) of the King in the English House of Lords. The House of Commons is a noble room indeed. It is an octagon, wainscoted round with Irish oak, which shames all mahogany, and galleried all round for the convenience of the ladies. The Speaker's chair is far more grand than the throne of the Lord-Lieutenant. But what surprised me above all were the kitchens of the House, and the large apparatus for good eating. Tables were placed from one end of a large hall to the other; which it seems, while the Parliament sits, are daily covered with meat at four or five o'clock, for the accommodation of the members. Alas, poor Ireland! Who shall teach thy very senators wisdom?'

The sea-passage between the two countries was then a far more formidable thing than is the case at present; and when all depended on the wind there would be much uncertainty whether a vessel would weigh anchor or not. The sea-passage alone would occupy close upon twenty-four hours. Even when the date for putting off had come, a captain would be found 'in no haste to sail.' It required even more equanimity of temper when on

getting ready and going down to the quay 'no captain appeared either this day or the next.' A captain would send hasty messages for passengers to be in readiness; but unless the wind was quite in his favour soon cooled down. Thus, as early as the reign of George II., we find that Wesley learned certain rules which he put down for those who travelled between England and Ireland: 'Never pay till you set sail. Go not on board till the captain goes on board. Send not your baggage on board till you go yourself.'

Thus in those days, as is still the case in our own times, Ireland was a country of contrasts, but was then oppressed by unjust laws which have long since been replaced by good ones. In itself the country is a land of beauty and of great resources. In Wesley's day many of the disadvantages from which the Irish suffered came from without; they now come from within, or chiefly from the people themselves.

CHAPTER XII

WESLEY'S CHAPEL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

WHEN, in the good providence of God, the time had come for the dawn of the Great Revival in the late thirties of the eighteenth century, the more than twenty years term of office of Sir Robert Walpole was drawing to a close; the fall was near of the peace Minister, who with all his faults and vices seems to have better understood the interests of his country than was the case with other politicians of that day. London was then of smaller extent than our modern Glasgow. The present Mansion House was in course of erection, and hitherto the site had been ornamented with trees, and had been something of a fruit market and a recreation-ground combined. As regards London in general, many of the great suburban parishes were villages, the main part of what is now the East End was fields or gardens; and at least one fashionable quarter at the West End was a farm. That part of Moorfields where Wesley's first meeting-house, the Foundery, was situated, Mr. Tyerman describes as 'what would nowadays be called a park, laid

WESLEY OPENING CITY ROAD CHAPEL, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1778.

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out in grass-plots, intersected by broad gravel-walks, and the favourite resort of citizens seeking exercise and recreation.' Beneath the trees was a favourite promenade of the citizens; while there were booths where fancy articles and refreshments were sold. London was already considered to be too big for the national welfare; and vice, luxury, and extravagance seem to have been common to all classes. Religion seemed to be at the lowest ebb; and it was indeed when things were apparently at the worst—the darkest hour before the dawn—that the Revival broke out in several places in Great Britain and America.

Wesley's attention had been attracted to Moorfields, where he had conducted outdoor services. It happened that there had been standing on the ground, in a semi-ruinous state, for about a quarter of a century, a building called the Foundery, that being the place where the Government had cast many of their large guns which did service in the wars of the early part of the eighteenth century. Cannon, taken by the Duke of Marlborough during the war with France, were taken to this old building, where about two years after the death of Queen Anne, or in 1716, it was determined to recast them.

It was then customary to admit a number of the public to witness such an operation as this, and on the occasion referred to an unusually large assembly were present. From an account of what took place we borrow this passage:—

'Many of the nobility, and several general officers, were present, for whose accommodation

temporary galleries had been erected near the furnaces. Among the company then drawn together was Andrew Schalch, an intelligent young man, a native of Schaffhausen, in Switzerland, who was travelling for improvement. He was at the Foundery at an early hour, and having been permitted minutely to inspect the works, detected some humidity in the moulds, and immediately perceived the danger likely to arise from the pouring into them of hot metal in such a condition. Schalch communicated his fears to Colonel Armstrong, the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance, explained his reasons for believing that an explosion would take place, and strongly urged him and the rest of the company to withdraw from the Foundery before the casting of the metal.'

It was soon seen that this advice was not given without good reason. The explosion predicted took place; the roof of the building was blown off; several persons were killed, and a number were hurt. Schalch was advertised for, and the knowledge he had shown led to his being appointed Master Founder to the Board of Ordnance, a post he held for sixty years, during which period no accident occurred. As it was not thought advisable to continue such dangerous operations so near to the City, a new Foundery was put up near Woolwich; and thus, when churches were so often closed against them, the dilapidated building became one of the homes of Religion in London.

The ruinous building was now utilised as the

headquarters of what had come to be called Methodism. The Foundery stood on the east side of Windmill Street, not far from the present Wesley's Chapel. According to Mr. Tyerman, 'There were two front doors, one leading to the chapel, and the other to the preachers' house, school, and band-room. A bell was hung in a plain belfry, and was rung every morning a little before five o'clock for early service, and every evening at nine for family worship, as well as at sundry other times. The chapel, which would accommodate some fifteen hundred people, was without pews; but on the ground floor, immediately before the pulpit, were about a dozen seats with back rails, appropriated to female worshippers. Under the front gallery were the free seats for women, and under the side galleries the free seats for men. The front gallery was used exclusively by females, and the side gallery by males.' Wesley held that it was in accordance with primitive custom for the sexes to sit apart; and he took care that all the benches, whether for rich or poor, should be alike, all alike being available for the first comers. Adjoining the chapel was a room capable of seating three hundred people, and here assembled the bands, classes, and those who came to the morning service at five o'clock. The day-school was also conducted in this room, and there books were sold. Quite aloft, or 'high up in the air,' were Wesley's own apartments; and soon after the building was acquired, his mother died there. Attached was a house for servants and preachers.

A coach-house, stable, and walled garden, all bordering on the fields, gave to the place a semi-rural appearance. Mr. G. J. Stevenson tells us that 'the old Foundery pulpit is preserved in the Wesleyan College at Richmond, and is used by the students every week; . . . the Foundery bell is, we believe, used at the school at Friars Mount, which belongs to Mr. Davis of Whitechapel; . . . the old chandelier is now in use in the Wesleyan Chapel at Bowes in Yorkshire; and some of the old seats are preserved in the basement of City Road Chapel.' Writing in the early seventies of the nineteenth century, that devoted Methodist just quoted makes the still more remarkable statement: 'There are still living those who remember some of the first worshippers at the Foundery, and from their oral testimony we learn that for some time the Wesleys conducted the five o'clock morning service in a roofless building.' At first the outlook was quite a rural one; but at the opening of the reign of George III., builders appeared on the scene; and while Finsbury Square and some other streets were in course of construction, in the dark of early morning, or on winter nights, visitors to the Foundery made their way with lanterns over what was at times hardly better than a Slough of Despond.

The still partially dilapidated Foundery, after being forsaken and avoided for so many years, seemed all at once to have become popular; but while the common people were attracted, there were those who scowled and murmured as though

the place had been a disorderly conventicle. When he was first attracted, even Silas Told did not at once have prejudice overcome; for what he knew to the contrary, Wesley might be some kind of impostor, or a Romanist in disguise. Others, who had their arrogance stimulated by opponents, were more confident that the preaching could be suppressed by legal means. Late in the spring of 1740 the news flew through London that 'the Foundery was lately presented at Hicks's Hall for a seditious assembly.' It happened in this instance that the magistrate, Sir John Gunson, was favourable to the cause; but had it been otherwise, the King, despite his moral character, was representative of the Protestant Succession, and as such would not tolerate persecution for conscience' sake.

In its earliest days the two preachers who were the master attraction at the Foundery were the brothers Wesley, and their varied adventures in the pulpit were very characteristic of the times. The early morning service must have been very attractive when such large congregations were attracted. This seems to have commenced with prayer and singing, followed by what was then considered a brief sermon, all being concluded as it had begun. 'The place was rough, and the people poor; but the service was simple, scriptural, beautiful,' we find it remarked. The pulpit 'of rough deal boards' was a contrast to 'the elaborate pulpits of the Established Church,' but it gave forth no uncertain sound. Now and then 'the sons of Belial blasphemed'; but usually, under the

power of the Word, they would become 'quiet as lambs.' On one occasion men who seem to have been the heroes of a mob forced their way into the meeting 'and began to speak great, swelling words'; but in this case also, when used by John Wesley, 'the hammer of the Word brake the rock in pieces.' Then 'a smuggler rushed in and cursed vehemently,' with the satisfactory result that he was 'cured of smuggling.' The times were apparently far worse than these things showed; but what must have been the power of the Revival when some hundreds of ardent listeners to the Gospel message could be gathered in a ruinous old house at five o'clock in the morning?

The Revival had not very long pursued its course when Susanna Wesley, still remembered as a kind of incomparable woman, entered into rest at the age of seventy-three. When Wesley heard of his mother's illness he was at Bristol, and leaving that city on Sunday, July 18, he reached London on the Tuesday following. Mrs. Wesley was found to be on the border of the eternal country without doubt or fear. Her elder son gives this account of a visit he paid her on Friday, July 23:—

'About three in the afternoon I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bedside. She was in her last conflict; unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four the silver cord was loosing,

and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."'

The funeral took place in Bunhill Fields burial-ground, which is now just opposite the gates of Wesley's Chapel:—

'Sun. August 1.—Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her fathers. The portion of Scripture from which I afterwards spoke was, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side eternity.'

In course of time the quondam Foundery became a haven of hope for the poor, and not alone for those who were members of the Methodist Society. Thus, under date of December 4, 1746, Wesley writes: 'I mentioned to the Society my design of giving physic to the poor. About thirty came the next day, and in three weeks about three hundred. This we continued for

several years, till, the number of patients still increasing, the expense was greater than we could bear: meantime, through the blessing of God, many who had been ill for months or years were restored to perfect health.' All this is wonderfully suggestive of the writer being far in advance of the medical science of his time. Here and there a practitioner such as Abercrombie might rise head and shoulders above his fellows and combat disease in a rational manner, but numbers of the ordinary surgeons not only did no good, they must have committed considerable havoc among their people, who must indeed have well won the distinction of being called 'patients.' The Wesleyan leader was shrewd enough to notice that they did no good; in the course of his visitation of the sick, he could not but observe that they fostered or encouraged the disease which they were paid to cure.

Then, while Wesley was a rigid economist, he encouraged thrift among the poor by helping them to help themselves. He knew nothing of that Gospel of mere 'getting on' which has been so persistently preached in our own time; and which, if attention be given to that alone, must in the end turn out one of the most bitter of disappointments. On Sunday, January 17, 1748, Wesley writes:—

'I made a public collection towards the lending-stock for the poor. Our rule is, to lend only twenty shillings at once, which is repaid weekly within three months. I began this about a year and a half ago: Thirty pounds sixteen shillings

were then collected; and out of this no less than two hundred and fifty-five persons have been relieved in eighteen months. Dr. W——, hearing of this design, sent a guinea towards it; as did an eminent Deist the next morning.'

It was quite natural in that age, when people were apt to look distrustingly on any innovation, that a man who favoured such novelties should attract attention. The goodness of the tree was proved by its fruits, however. 'I do not know that any one patient has yet died under my hands,' Wesley was able to say. It was necessary for him to defend himself in the newspapers, and even in a letter to Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury. As was inevitable, success led to the enterprise being extended. A dispensary such as had done so much for the poor at the Foundery was opened at Bristol.

One little institution attached to the Foundery was a poorhouse, which at one time sheltered nine widows, a blind woman, and two children. There were, besides, the servants, and several preachers, all of whom fared alike. 'I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table,' says Wesley: 'And we rejoice herein,' he adds, 'as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom.'

A young woman who sometimes appeared at the Foundery was Grace, the widow of Alexander Murray, and afterwards of John Bennet, an active preacher and helper of the Methodist Revival,

but afterwards he 'was wholly set against Mr. Wesley, and against the whole Methodist doctrine and discipline.' When a widow for the second time, Grace was still a comparatively young woman, but was one of very varied experience. The Murray family into which she first married was Scottish, but had become reduced in the world through being mixed up with the rebellion on behalf of the Pretender in 1715. For a time her first husband was violently opposed to evangelical religion, but was otherwise minded when he died. As a very attractive widow of twenty-six, Grace returned to her parents' home at Newcastle. Afterward she removed to Wesley's Orphan House, where, in addition to other duties, she attended to various invalided preachers who there found a temporary home. On one occasion she nursed Wesley himself during an illness, and on his recovery he asked her to become his wife. 'This is too great a blessing for me,' she said; 'I can't tell how to believe it. This is all I could have wished for under heaven!' Unhappily for herself and for her lover, Grace was fickle-minded, and what might have proved a happier alliance for Wesley, and also for the young widow herself, was destined never to come to pass. It is true that Charles Wesley and other prominent members of the Society were opposed to the marriage; but there can be no doubt that Wesley himself was bitterly disappointed, and regarded the affair as one of the greatest trials of his life. Grace was a coquette who, if she had two lovers,

favoured one and then encouraged the other. At length, in the presence of Charles Wesley and Whitefield, the young widow was married to Bennet on October 3, 1749. Henry Moore, in his Life of Wesley, shows how severe the trial was, and this was the more so because Grace's service among the Societies had been so extensive and so greatly blessed. A verse or two from Wesley's 'Reflections upon Past Providences,' written just after Grace's marriage, best show how deeply he was wounded:—

'I saw her run with winged speed,
In works of faith and labouring love;
I saw her glorious toil succeed,
And showers of blessing from above
Crowning her warm, effectual prayer,
And glorified my God in her.

Companions now in weal and woe
No power on earth could us divide;
Nor summer's heat nor winter's snow
Could tear my partner from my side;
Nor toil, nor weariness, nor pain,
Nor horrors of the angry main.

Oft—though as yet the nuptial tie
Was not—clasping her hand in mine,
"What force," she said, "beneath the sky,
Can our well-knit souls disjoin?
With thee I'd go to India's coast,
To worlds in distant oceans lost!"

Such was the friend than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless baleful hour,
—For ever mentioned with a tear!—
The tempter's unresisted power
—O the unutterable smart—
Tore from my inward bleeding heart!

In his ample biography of Wesley, Tyerma somewhat disparages this woman's character; b in any case Wesley never forgot her. In 178 in company with Henry Moore, he called c Mrs. Grace Bennet, on hearing that she 'wished t see him.' Moore thus describes the interview:—

'Mr. Wesley, with evident feeling, resolved t visit her: and the next morning he took me wit him to Colebrooke-row, where her son then reside The meeting was affecting; but Mr. Wesley pre served more than his usual self-possession. I was easy to see, notwithstanding the many year which had intervened, that both in sweetness o spirit, and in person and manners, she was a fi subject for the tender regrets expressed in thos verses which I have presented to the reader. The interview did not continue long, and I do no remember that I ever heard Mr. Wesley mentior her name afterwards.'

A very remarkable time in the history of the Foundery was the early part of the year 1750, when London was visited by two somewhat severe shocks of earthquake. On the first occasion, 'the panic-stricken inhabitants rushed into the streets, fearing to be buried beneath the ruins of their tottering houses.' The second shock, a month later, was more severe than the first. It appears that Charles Wesley was just beginning to preach when the shock occurred, and 'it shook the Foundery so violently that we all expected it to fall on our heads.' The preacher changed his text for 'Therefore will we not fear though the earth

be removed, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea, for the Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.' The sermon was made effective by the extreme terror of the people. A good deal of damage was done, as well might be the case when 'the earth moved westward, then east, then westward again, through all London and Westminster.' It was evidently a very unnerving phenomenon; for the motion was 'strong and jarring,' which was 'attended with a rumbling noise like that of thunder.' What really happened, however, was nothing like so alarming as the frenzy of popular excitement when a common soldier, who may have been mad, gave out that far worse things were at hand. If the Day of Judgment had actually been coming on, the terror of the populace, who fled into the country, or encamped for the night in the parks, could hardly have been more acute. One good effect was that the preachers of the Revival had crowded congregations. The scene at the Foundery was similar to what took place elsewhere; for Charles Wesley, who was the preacher, says: 'Many came all night, knocking at the Foundery door, begging admittance for God's sake.'

It was but a few weeks after this almost tragic time that Wesley had a fall on London Bridge, when he severely sprained his leg. The thoroughfare across the Thames was then a street with houses on both sides; while at either end the heads of traitors on spikes would be exhibited. Until now London Bridge had been the only

means of crossing the river except by ferry; but at that date Westminster Bridge had been opened only a few weeks previously. Wesley's accident happened on February 10, 1751; and thus when he conducted the service at the Foundery on Sunday the 17th, he 'preached kneeling,' and did so on some other occasions. He was suffering from the effects of this accident when he contracted his unhappy marriage with Mrs. Vazeille, the disastrous consequences of which Charles Wesley seems to have been able to foresee.

When, in 1753, Wesley was overtaken by illness, and fears were seriously entertained that his life might be cut short, the fervent prayers which were offered for his restoration were such as might remind us of the continuous prayer-meetings which were held on behalf of C. H. Spurgeon during his last illness. Another historical scene of the times of the Great Revival, in connection with the Foundery, took place on February 16, 1759, a public fast-day in prospect of what it was feared might be a French invasion. Wesley, who was ever ready to take advantage of any public occurrence to advance his cause, was in good form, so that he got through quite an ordinary day's work. Thus, at five a.m. he preached at Wandsworth; at nine o'clock, and again at three, he conducted similar services at Spitalfields; and finally at half-past eight in the evening he had a full service at the Foundery, Lady Huntingdon being among the audience. 'All the ministers prayed in turn,' remarks Charles Wesley. 'It was

a most blessed time of refreshment. My brother preached, and won all our hearts. I never liked him better, and was never more united to him since his unhappy marriage.'

A very sad kind of double tragedy happened at the Foundery in 1773, just at the time that Dr. Johnson and Boswell were on their Highland tour—'Poor Samuel Francks,' or, as the younger Wesley calls him, 'faithful Sam Francks,' was overtaken by a fit of insanity and hanged himself. Wesley refers to 'the sudden death of my book-keeper'; and printing and publishing books was then such a hazardous business that the concern was found to be £900 in debt. A few days later, Matthews, the master of the day-school, also committed suicide.

During the phenomenal frost which set in on Christmas night 1762, and continued for over a month, we find that the Foundery was a centre for the distribution of the necessaries of life to numbers of people in distress. It was a most remarkable time, the Thames being frozen over at Richmond, while below London Bridge huge blocks of ice floated up and down with the tide, while higher up a fair was held on the surface of the river. Many fires occurred, the streets swarmed with beggars, numbers of people were frozen to death; while seabirds, driven by stress of weather from their native haunts, appeared even in the streets of London. A paragraph in Lloyd's *Evening Post* of January 26, notified: 'Great numbers of poor people had pease pottage and

barley broth given them at the Foundery at the expense of Mr. Wesley; and a collection was made at the same place of worship for further supplying the necessities of the destitute, at which upwards of a hundred pounds was contributed.'

The monthly Magazine of the Wesleyan Methodist denomination was started at or about the time of the opening of the building now known as Wesley's Chapel. The old building continued to be held in possession during some years; Wesley and his preachers were still lodged there; but the place became so dilapidated that a tenant who rented part of the premises paid less than a shilling a week for the privilege. According to the late Mr. G. J. Stevenson, 'The Rev. James Creighton slept at the Foundery during the night of November 10, 1785, "whilst the rain was pouring through the roof, and burst down a part of the ceiling of the chamber." He further describes the building as "This tottering fabric with its mouldering walls."'

No account of the Foundery would be complete without mention of John Downes, one of the early Methodist preachers, whose mind was thought by Wesley to be equal to Sir Isaac Newton's. On November 5, 1774, he went to West Street Chapel to preach, but when attempting to pray, his voice failed, and he was carried home to die. Like many others who gave their time to the work, he was extremely poor, so that the people who made up the congregation at the Foundery paid for his funeral. When he passed away, the whole of his personality amounted to sixpence; but in those

days the wages of Wesley himself were no more than what might be given to a day-labourer, and were far less than those of an artisan.

Even so late as nearly a hundred years after the Revolution, it had been the custom for all places of worship not strictly belonging to the Established Church to be put up in side streets; or if a site was obtained in a leading thoroughfare the main building would be hidden by smaller ones being erected in front. The City authorities, from whom Wesley obtained his site, actually stipulated that the main building should be hidden from the public gaze by smaller houses being put up in front; and the privilege of having the front open was only conceded by some advantage, not in the agreement, being given back in return.

Writing in April 1777, Wesley says in his Diary: 'Monday 21 was the day for laying the foundation of the new chapel. The rain befriended us much, by keeping away thousands who purposed to be there. But there were still such multitudes that it was with great difficulty I got through them to lay the first stone. Upon this was a plate of brass (covered with another stone) on which was engraved, "This was laid by Mr. John Wesley on April 21, 1777." Probably this will be seen no more by any human eye; but will remain there till the earth and the works thereof are burned up. The sun breaking out, I snatched the opportunity of preaching to many thousands in Moorfields. All were still as night, while I showed how the Son of God was manifested to

destroy the works of the devil.' This was a fitting text; for at that time there were persons who were bold enough to deny that any special work for God had been done in England during the period we call the Great Revival. Gibson, Bishop of London, had done so. The building of the chapel was the greatest undertaking of the kind he had ever engaged in, and while the work was in progress he had to spend more time in London. He was not above holding his hat for a collection at a countryside open-air service. Just about a a week before Christmas 1777, 'sundry saws, planes, and other carpenters' tools' belonging to the workmen were stolen, and ten guineas reward was offered for information concerning the thieves. The chapel was opened on Sunday, November 1, 1778. On August 8, 1779, Wesley slept for the last time at the Foundery, and just two months later he lodged for the first time at the new house close by the chapel.

The great building seems to have been providentially preserved from fire just when it was completed. In the small hours of morning, on December 30, 1780, Wesley awoke before his time, and noticed that a bright light shone into the room,—a large timber-yard close by had its stocks alight, and the appearance was that in all probability the new chapel would presently become fuel for the flames. Without panic, however, Wesley called his friends around him for prayer. 'Then going out, we found the fire about one hundred yards off, and had broke out while the

wind was south. But a sailor cried out, "Avast! Avast! The wind is turned in a moment!" So it did, to the west, while we were at prayer, and so drove the flames from us. We then thankfully returned; and I rested well the residue of the night. In all human probability, the chapel was spared from harm in answer to the prayers of the Lord's people.'

The work continued to prosper in a remarkable way, and Wesley's continued popularity was shown by the fact, that when over eighty years of age, he could command a congregation at the new chapel at four o'clock on a winter morning. The London preachers, or the main part of them, lodged in the house which Wesley himself occupied. On one occasion he was much disconcerted, on coming down in the early morning, to find that no preacher to take the service was out of bed. He forthwith ordered that all should retire to rest at nine in the evening, so that there should be no excuse for late rising!

The most stirring event which took place in connection with the chapel in 1788, was the death of Charles Wesley towards the end of March. How different those times were to our own is seen in the straitened circumstances of so eminent a preacher and writer, and whose sons both inherited the family genius which led them on to distinction. As was the case with Wesley himself, the income of Charles was only £60 a year; and when this greatest of Methodist hymn-writers died, his family did not possess money enough to pay for

the funeral. Notwithstanding his poverty, however, Charles Wesley lived in a large house close to the old parish church of Marylebone, in the graveyard of which he was buried. His house belonged to the widow of Colonel Gumley, a convert, and her spiritual father was allowed the use of the mansion rent free. Friends at the chapel collected sufficient to pay for the funeral. His last act seems to have been the writing of a hymn which has this verse—

'Oh that the joyful hour was come,
Which calls Thy ready servant home;
Unites me to the Church above,
Where angels chant the song of love;
And saints eternally proclaim
The glories of the heavenly Lamb.'

Just before starting on his last errand of mercy to the Continent, John Howard, the prison philanthropist, called at the chapel house; but Wesley was then on his way to Ireland. They were close friends, and in death they were separated only by about thirteen months. Wesley died at the chapel house in March 1791. The last letter he wrote was to Wilberforce, commending his efforts on behalf of the negroes. His funeral sermon was preached in the chapel by his favourite physician Dr. Whitehead.

The death of Wesley, in March 1791, would seem to have come somewhat unexpectedly; for a short time before he was expecting to set out on his usual journey to the North. Fearing that accident might occur through unmanageable crowds

if the funeral took place in the middle of the day, the interment was arranged for the early hours of morning, and, according to the strict directions of the departed, six poor men carried his remains to the grave. There was a great crowd nevertheless; but Wesley's wishes were observed as far as was practicable,—'I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom.'

November 29, 1815, was a red-letter day in the history of the chapel; for the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria, was present at the morning service, and the Duke's chaplain, Dr. W. B. Collyer, preached the sermon. The Lord Mayor and other persons of note were present. It was a time when amateur attempts at education were exciting popular interest, education being a matter in which the Duke of Kent was specially interested, when Bell and Lancaster were national heroes. Some time after a collection was made in the chapel on behalf of those who suffered through the Battle of Waterloo. In 1820 the first annual breakfast of the London preachers and their families took place at the chapel.

When the popular preacher Walter Griffith died in 1825, it was resolved to pay the greatest possible mark of respect to his remains by placing the coffin in Wesley's tomb, with seven others; and that being all that the space would hold, all were rearranged, Wesley's remains were enclosed in an oaken case and the vault permanently sealed.

WESLEY AND HIS PREACHERS

In the early part of the last century the Wesleyan preachers were often entertained at the house of the Holloway family, near the bridge in the City Road, and there 'the seraphic Dr. Coke,' who sold his estates to give the money to the missionary cause, for some time had a home. The late Mr. G. J. Stevenson, in his work on City Road Chapel, remarks: 'Thomas Holloway, the engraver, told the Rev. John Scott on one of his visits to their house, that he had been daily at Hampton Court for twenty-one years, engraving the cartoons, and that he had seen new beauties in these pictures constantly to the last.'

On one of the last days of his life—Monday, February 21, 1791—Wesley, being on the road to Twickenham to dine with a friend, called on Lady Mary Fitzgerald, when he 'conversed and prayed most sweetly.' Both in regard to social position and Christian attainments this lady belonged to the aristocracy of Methodism. Born in 1725, she died, at the age of ninety, in 1815, through her clothing taking fire. After her conversion she devoted a large part of her income to the general cause. Her remains lie in the graveyard of Wesley's Chapel.

Joseph Butterworth, M.P., born in 1770, the law bookseller of Fleet Street, was brother-in-law of Dr. Adam Clarke, and he was the original publisher of that worthy's Commentary on the Bible. As a young man, in 1796, Butterworth became converted under the preaching of Adam Clarke. As the eminent bookseller lived at his place of business,

the house became a centre of Methodist influence and hospitality. At different times he sat in the old House of Commons as representative successively of his native city of Coventry and of Dover. In Coventry the elder Butterworth was a Nonconformist preacher. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the missionary cause; and for a considerable time he conducted a young men's class at Wesley's Chapel, which met at seven o'clock on Sunday mornings.

Another hospitable table in Wesley's time and in succeeding years, was that of the Hovatts—father and son—who were undertakers in Bishopsgate, their house being nearly opposite the church. Mr. Hovatt was genial and generous; his wife, who 'had a fine commanding person,' was a model English hostess. At breakfast, dinner, and supper she was continually entertaining the preachers; and men whose stipend was only £16 a year knew how to enjoy themselves at her well-furnished board. John Hovatt, sen., was one of those who had attended at the Foundery; but nearly forty years after Wesley's death, preachers and their friends were constantly meeting at the Hovatts' home. Wesleyan preachers were then humble folk; and after partaking of the liberally provided repast, they would often carry away with them a parcel containing 'a sumptuous breakfast' for the following morning; 'or a bottle of wine was supplied to assist in restoring exhausted nature.'

There appear to have been several booksellers

who were associated with Wesley's Chapel from time to time, and among these was William Baynes, who died at the age of seventy-two in 1832. The first twenty years of his life were spent on his father's farm in Yorkshire; but he came to London and engaged himself to a wholesale draper in 1780. Even thus early he was more interested in the book trade than he was in woollen goods, so that out of business hours he examined the stocks of dealers and purchased such books as enabled him to commence business on his own account in Long Lane, whence he afterwards removed to Paternoster Row. He became a member of the congregation at Wesley's Chapel, and in all that he did, whether in business or in private life, he acted in accordance with the covenant with God which he had drawn up in early life. Baynes and Dr. Adam Clarke were friends, they were of the same age, and died in the same year, and the doctor and commentator once testified: 'Baynes knows a book or a curiosity at a glance, without being acquainted with its exact character, and I have rarely ever found him deceived in his estimate of what he judged to be intrinsically good; his tact serves as well as laborious knowledge, and makes him what he is, the best old bookseller in London.' The once well-known Wesleyan preacher, Thomas Jackson, characterised Baynes as one of the most eminent members of his profession in England. He once presided at a Sunday-school distribution of prizes; but on learning that all the scholars had

creditably conducted themselves, he sent a book as a prize to every child.

Among the preachers with whom Wesley was most intimately acquainted, few, if any, held a higher place in his affections than Henry Moore, who was of the same family as Tom Moore the poet. The chief aim of Moore in writing his biography of Wesley, of which we are told tens of thousands were circulated, was to correct the misrepresentations of Southey. When he came to London, at the age of nineteen, in 1770, he was at first captivated by the fast life of the town; but seems to have soon found good under the preaching of Charles Wesley. As a travelling preacher in his native country, Moore appears to have suffered great privations. He was a man of high attainments and of great decision of character. In one Conference one member remarked, 'A little child might lead Henry Moore with a silken cord'; but another very aptly added, 'Yes, if Brother Moore was willing to go.' His memory took him far back into the reign of George II., and he saw six or seven years of the reign of Queen Victoria; and when he was past ninety years of age, he was still found preaching in Wesley's Chapel. He must surely have been the last of the preachers who remembered his great leader as a personal friend and co-worker, for Moore survived him between fifty and sixty years.

In looking over the names of those who have been associated with Wesley's Chapel, we come across some who ranked as distinguished printers

of the Wesleyan Connexion. Thus, John Spurgeon printed *The Watchman* newspaper during twenty years, and he also founded more than one Benefit Building Society. He died in 1871, having retired from business about ten years previously. Then James Nichols, who was about six years of age when Wesley died, came to be called 'the learned printer of Hoxton Square.' Such educational advantages as he possessed in youth were mainly such as he secured for himself. At the age of eight he appears to have been working for his own living at Holbeck; but that did not prevent his studying for improvement, and afterwards he attended for a time at Leeds Grammar School. As a young man he was a competent tutor; but he preferred to give attention to printing, and commenced in that business at Leeds. When, soon afterwards, he removed his business to London, he was appointed chief printer to the Wesleyan Connexion; and the sons of many of the preachers are said to have learned printing at James Nichols' establishment. As a scholar and a gentleman he enjoyed the intimate friendship of many leading Wesleyan divines. The late Mr. G. J. Stevenson, who knew him well, tells us that 'his learning was manifested partly in the two chief works which he published, *Calvinism and Arminianism Compared*, and *The Works of James Arminius, with an Account of the Synod of Dort*, etc.; and also in the careful and accurate manner in which all his printing was done. He edited a number of important works for Mr. Tegg, all of which testify to his judgment,

care, and scholarship. His knowledge of modern sacred literature led to his twice receiving overtures to enter the ministry of the Church of England, but his deep humility led to his declining those offers.'

John Stubbs and Elizabeth his sister were both strong and interesting characters who were old enough to remember the brothers Wesley. The former was a goldsmith and jeweller at 241 High Holborn; his sister, being a woman of enterprise and of great decision of character, made her mark in the commercial world. Born at Prees in Shropshire, in the latter part of the reign of George II., she came to London on her own account as a young woman, and established the business of a colour and varnish manufacturer in Little Queen Street. Elizabeth was twice married, but survived both of her husbands. As a commercial woman her experience was probably unique; and while she amassed a large fortune by her own efforts, her open-handed liberality was an example to all wealthy Christian people who came after her. She died April 17, 1833, at the age of seventy-seven, when this notice of Mrs. Ives and her character and work appeared in the *Times*:—

'Possessed of a masculine understanding and almost Herculean strength, united with the most unremitting assiduity and perseverance, Mrs. Ives established the business purely by her own exertions. For upwards of thirty years she regularly took her journeys through the greater part of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and was thus well known

by the commercial travellers of that day. During the same period, when at home, she invariably superintended and assisted in the manufacturing department. Her hours of business generally commenced at four o'clock throughout the year, continued to a late period, occasionally the whole night. The result was the realisation of a considerable fortune, much of which during her lifetime was devoted to and expended on the numerous branches of her family (having no children of her own though twice married), to whom and their welfare she was attached with a devotedness rarely witnessed.'

It was as a Christian woman of open-handed benevolence to all that needed help that came beneath her notice, however, that Elizabeth Ives was long remembered by London Methodists. Her remains lie in the graveyard of Wesley's Chapel, but she was for long a member of the congregation at Great Queen Street. She was a chief contributor to the building fund of that chapel, and when the building was opened she paid down £100 in order that one seat might be retained for herself for life. Mr. G. J. Stevenson was acquainted with a quondam commercial traveller, who in former days had travelled in company with Mrs. Elizabeth Ives; and he had known her realise a profit of £1000 during one journey on varnish alone. From first to last Mrs. Ives gave large sums to her poor relatives. On one occasion she would hand to a needy one a bag containing fifty spade guineas to enliven the Christmas season; at

another time she would give all she had in her pocket to a poor person who was hard pressed. Notwithstanding such generosity, the fortune of Mrs. Ives amounted to £80,000 when she retired from business at the age of seventy and purchased Lampton Hall, near Hounslow, as a place of residence. There she put up a chapel to accommodate three hundred persons, and presented it to the Wesleyan Connexion. Quite a large number of her own poor relatives were not only clothed, they were daily fed at her well-furnished table. 'Methodist preachers were always welcome to her hospitality, and not a few of them realised how blessed it was to receive in cases of sickness, bereavement, or difficulty,' remarks Mr. Stevenson. 'To a case of urgent need she has been known to take her purse and empty the entire contents into the hands of the suppliant. She cherished a high regard for the means of grace; and when the hour for weekday evening service came, she would start off at once, leave her business, and in a few minutes be in her pew at Great Queen Street.' The family connections of Elizabeth Ives seem to have been not only numerous but somewhat grasping and quarrelsome, so that after her death a main part of her property was squandered in Chancery law costs. The law expenses so far exceeded the sums in dispute, that in one case a bequest of £4000 cost £7000 to secure it. The case was so notorious, that Lord Brougham passed a Bill to prevent such vexatious litigation in the future. John Stubbs, the Holborn goldsmith, often joined with his sister

Elizabeth Ives in her charitable enterprises; and both were doubtless stimulated in their zeal for the Methodist cause by remembering that their mother was one of the earliest to be attracted by Wesley's services at the Foundery.

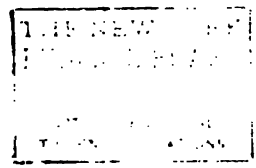
Among the poets whose remains found a last resting-place in the graveyard of Wesley's Chapel we have to reckon John Bakewell, who died at the age of ninety-eight in 1819, and author of the hymn, 'Hail, thou once despised Jesus'; and Thomas Olivers, who in 1772 wrote his hymn, 'The God of Abraham praise,' in Bakewell's house.

As a timber merchant and builder, who had his place of business in Castle Street, City Road, Samuel Tooth, in company with some others, had the contract for building the new chapel. We find it remarked by a competent authority that 'all subsequent examinations of the building have only proved the excellence of the material, and the soundness of the entire structure,' this being the more creditable because a roof of such width unsupported by pillars had never before been constructed in this country. But while Samuel Tooth was an enthusiastic Methodist, a man of tact in business, and of commanding presence, he was an eccentric man. Two trees grew in his timber-yard, and these he cut down; and with their wood was made one coffin for himself and one for his wife. For a lengthened period the daughters of this couple conducted a high-class boarding-school for girls at Stamford Hill.

Another and scholarly noteworthy bookseller in London of a century ago was the Scotsman, John Bruce, who died at the age of seventy-one in 1823. He was old enough to have know Wesley in the latter years of that great man's life; and he attended at the Foundery in its last days. His catholicity was shown by his circle of friends including Dr. Hawker of Plymouth. He loved to undertake pioneer work for the Church in needy neighbourhoods; while he was so far in advance of his time that he endeavoured to found a literary society for young men. Mr. G. J. Stevenson tells us: 'Mr. Bruce resided a few doors from City Road Chapel, and his house was open to Methodist preachers day and night, and the freedom to come and go, as suited their own comfort and convenience, was a privilege most of the London preachers availed themselves of for thirty years, especially as there was a comfortable study and a good theological library always ready for their use, and an unpretentious hospitality which made them always feel at home.'

Dr. Jabez Bunting, who died at Midsummer 1858 at the age of seventy-nine, was one of the most eminent Wesleyan preachers of his day; and in connection with the Missionary Society, the Theological Institute, and the Conference, he seems to have held an unusual number of official situations. He preached the Gospel for nearly sixty years. One of his chief friends, whom he influenced in youth, was Richard Watson, the copyright of whose books were purchased by the Connexion for £2000.

Bunting and Watson together did much to raise the tone of the Magazine, as well as all of the publications of the Book-Room. That business, founded by Wesley, is now a large denominational concern, which sends its Christian publications throughout the country and to the very ends of the earth.



THE ROOM IN WHICH WESLEY DIED.

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CHAPTER XIII

QUAKERS IN LONDON AND ELSEWHERE

FROM time to time, while on his travels, Wesley came in contact with members of the Society of Friends; and though he never favoured their sentiments, his acquaintance with some of these was greatly valued. He makes interesting references to them such as affords another insight into eighteenth-century life. It even appears to us as though the subject of the Friends and their 'Meetings' in London was then invested with greater interest than can be the case in our times, became so many of their stations in the metropolis remained intact as they had come down from the heroic Puritan period. If we supplement Wesley's Diary with information contained in such a work as Messrs. Beck & Ball's *London Friends' Meetings*, we shall obtain a tolerably clear idea of the general outlook one hundred and fifty years ago.

The old meeting-houses of London and the near suburbs have, in many instances, left traces of their sites in streets and courts which are named after them. Take, for example, Quaker Street,

Spitalfields, so called after a meeting which once existed there, and which, being old enough to have been damaged by the Great Storm of 1703, had seen its best days, and was passing out of use in the early forties of the eighteenth century when Wesley was already earnestly engaged in itinerant service. The chief centre of all, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, has of course a still more interesting history. The stately mansion of Devonshire House, with its spacious grounds, stood there. Its richly carved pillars, chimney-pieces, and curiously wainscoted rooms, showed that the place was a princely residence in days when Queen Elizabeth is said to have been a visitor. Friends had rented two or three of the spacious rooms after their meeting at Bull and Mouth had been destroyed in the Great Fire. In the early years of the Methodist Revival, considerable alterations were made, and from that time to this, the 'Meeting' has grown into the present extensive establishment. There was also the Peel Meeting, situated near the ancient St. John's Gate at Clerkenwell—a quaint kind of place having many interesting memories. There were 'Meetings' in Southwark, as well as in the more near and distant suburbs. Thus, we shall not visit the severely plain but still pre-eminently attractive Quaker Meeting at Winchmore Hill without being reminded that the remains of Dr. Fothergill—to whose skilful treatment Wesley was so greatly indebted at the time of his serious breakdown in 1753—have lain there since 1780. In his day, this

Quaker physician was the chief of his profession in London, his practice at one time being worth £7000 a year. In his treatment of disease, Dr. Fothergill was a welcome contrast to the dangerous empirics who too often represented the medical science of his day. He also inherited certain seventeenth-century eccentricities; so that on one occasion, I believe, he walked along the Edinburgh High Street, his shoulders naked to the waist, to warn the people that God's vengeance would overtake them. The prescription he gave to Wesley, when he seemed to be recovering from the illness already referred to, was characteristic, and shows much of common-sense discernment, *e.g.*: 'Dr. Fothergill told me plain I must not stay in town a day longer; adding, "If anything does thee good, it must be the country air, with rest, asses' milk, and riding daily."' Thus we see that, on certain occasions, Wesley came into direct contact with Friends, and had good reason to esteem them.

When he began his great work of itinerant preaching, Wesley met representative Quakers, and though he did not like disputations, he was always ready to converse with them in a friendly manner. One of his earliest adventures in this department occurred when he was on the road in the North, in March 1738: 'Being faint in the evening, I called at Altringham, and there lit upon a Quaker, well skilled in, and therefore (as I soon found) sufficiently fond of, controversy. After an hour spent therein (perhaps not in vain),

I advised him to dispute as little as possible; but rather follow after holiness, and walk humbly with his God.'

Certain Quakers may have been among the first to question the genuineness of the Methodist Revival; and more especially, they looked with suspicion on the striking and mysterious phenomena which characterised its early days. We cannot wonder at people wishing to test in an unmistakable manner the genuineness of what they saw and heard; but we need not be surprised that some, who had apparently made up their minds not to be convinced, had, at last, the truth impressed upon them in a way which added interest or new terror to the situation.

A Quaker and a physician were among the observers who were chiefly interested at Newgate in Bristol while Wesley was preaching on a May day in 1739. 'We understood that many were offended at the cries of those on whom the power of God came,' says Wesley. In that gaol, which in those days seldom wanted its complement of prisoners, many 'broke out into strong cries and tears.' The physician could 'hardly believe his own eyes and ears'; but on going near to continue the investigation, he at once became convinced that there was no fraud. Nevertheless, the woman affected showed very acute symptoms; 'great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook,' and while not refusing to acknowledge supernatural agency, he was puzzled. It was not fraud; it was not disease; but what

was the cause? Then came the climax; 'when both her soul and body were healed in a moment, he acknowledged the finger of God.'

Immediately afterwards, or on May-Day 1739, 'many were offended again, and, indeed, much more than before.' This time, the preaching was not at the Bristol Newgate, but at a more ordinary place not far away. Wesley well understood the character or meaning of the manifestations; he was awed, but not troubled, when his 'voice could scarce be heard' above the groanings of those who were affected. According to his custom, Wesley asked that those who were struggling for peace and liberty might be set free. The answer came according to their faith: 'Many of those who had been long in darkness, saw the dawn of a great light.'

It so happened, however, that a Quaker who stood in the crowd 'was not a little displeased' at what he confidently believed to be 'the dissimulation of those creatures.' He even showed his contempt of their behaviour by 'biting his lips and knitting his brows.' Presently, however, this observant Quaker, himself 'dropped down as thunder-struck.' He so far showed the more acute symptoms, that his agony was 'terrible to behold.' Prayer was made for him also, the result being that he found the peace of God, and then cried aloud so that all might hear, 'Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord!'

The way in which Wesley came into contact with Friends in different parts of the country from

time to time, had the effect of bringing out his own characteristic sentiments; while at the same time we see what kind of sentiments prevailed among the disciples of George Fox in the time of the Georges. Some weeks after the incident at Bristol just mentioned, Wesley met with this adventure at Blackheath:—

'I had much talk with one who is called a Quaker; but he could not receive my saying. I was too strict for him, and talked of such perfection as he could not think necessary; being persuaded there was no harm in costly apparel, provided it was plain and grave; nor in putting scarlet or gold upon our houses, so it were not upon our clothes.'

When Wesley returned to Bristol during that same summer of 1739, he asked 'a serious Quaker' why he absented himself from the preaching services which he had been accustomed to attend. The reply was that such services were not prompted by the Spirit of God. Wesley and his people had 'fixed times of preaching beforehand'; but according to Scripture they ought to do nothing unless 'moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.' Wesley held that he was doing what Scripture commanded as he had opportunity. The other maintained that this was to regard the 'letter that killeth.' Of course neither was convinced, and Wesley hoped that he should continue so to regard the matter.

There were those who even by false or dishonest means endeavoured to foment wordy

combats between Wesley and the Quakers. There was a young Quaker at Bristol named Chandler, who was accustomed to speak at Friends' Meetings, but who was unknown to Wesley even by sight. There were those, however, as he tells us, who had been 'at the pains of carrying him, as from me, a formal challenge to dispute; and had afterwards told him that I had declared, in the open Society, I challenged Joseph Chandler to dispute, and he promised to come and broke his word.' 'This honest Quaker,' as Wesley calls him, scented the conspiracy; and all 'vanished into air' when he sent to ask 'if these things were so.' It was thought that 'many idle tales' would fare likewise if others acted in a similar manner.

In the early days of the Revival, Cornish Friends appear to have accorded Wesley a very warm welcome into the far south of England. In some respects this was opportune; for at that time excessive hospitality does not seem to have been offered to strangers in that county. On a certain day, when Wesley was gathering blackberries along a hedgeside to appease hunger, he remarked to a friend that Cornwall was one of the best counties in England to give an appetite, but one of the worst in which to find anyone to offer a meal.

In due time friendly Quakers were found who would do so, however. While Wesley was riding through the village of Sticklepath, one stopped him and asked shortly, 'Is not thy name John Wesley?' Some others then came up, and the unanimous

invitation was for the itinerant preacher to stop there. 'I did so,' it is added; 'and before we had spoken many words our souls took acquaintance with each other. I found they were called Quakers; but that did not hurt me; seeing the love of God was in their hearts.' He had thus made some considerable progress in liberality; for only a few years previously it would have 'hurt' him much to find that his hospitable entertainers were not of the Church of England.

Of course it was to be expected that, in common with other evangelical denominations, Quakers would benefit from the refreshing influences of the Methodist Revival. We even meet with an instance of one who had had the place and privileges of a believer—which had been surrendered through inconsistency—fully restored through the instrumentality of John Nelson, the preaching mason. Towards the end of February 1746, when snow lay deep on the ground, Wesley addressed 'a whole company of Quakers' at Skircoat Green, not far from Halifax. 'The good man of the house,' who was old enough to remember the reign of Charles II., was formerly a minister among his own people; 'but from fear of man he desisted.' In the reign of Queen Anne—which was not a favourable time for the growth of religion, notwithstanding the splendour of its achievements in literature—he gave up his work, 'and so quenched the Spirit'; and lived 'in darkness for near forty years.' He went to hear John Nelson, who, on that occasion, spoke of 'the love of God in Christ,' in his own

forcible way, the result being, so far as the octogenarian Quaker was concerned, that 'light again sprung up in his soul.'

It was altogether a contrast to such a case as the above, when a once zealous Methodist became a still more zealous Quaker, and so showed an enthusiasm which bordered on fanaticism. A striking instance of this kind came under Wesley's notice in the year 1753.

On September 10 he preached to malefactors in the Bristol Newgate; but found that he 'could make little impression upon them.' He adds: 'I then took horse for Paulton, where I called on Stephen Plummer, once of our Society, but now a zealous Quaker.' This quondam Methodist welcomed his friend with great cordiality, and accompanied him to the service, where, however, things did not turn out quite as might have been expected. 'Being straitened for time, I concluded sooner than usual,' remarks Wesley; 'but as soon as I had done, Stephen began.' The Quaker was not at any loss for words, so that he seemed to be no nearer coming to an end after he had held on for half an hour than when he began. As time was precious, his chief auditor 'rose up to go away,' and noticing this, the Quaker's sister tried to prevail upon her brother to bring his address to a close. These womanly endeavours were so far unsuccessful, however, that her brother 'flew into a violent rage, and roared louder and louder.' It became evident that in such an extreme case unusual means would have to be adopted; but

there did not seem to be any ready way out of the difficulty until, seeing just what was wanted, 'an honest man took him in his arms and gently carried him away.' Such timely action was more effective than argument. 'What a wise providence was it that this poor young man turned Quaker some years before he ran mad,' said Wesley. 'So the honour of turning his brain now rests upon them, which otherwise must have fallen upon the Methodists.'

When Wesley was in Ireland, in the summer of 1765, he happened to meet with the Journal of William Edmundson, 'the gifted preacher,' as we find him called, but who was characterised by the American, Roger Williams, as 'nothing but a bundle of ignorance and boisterousness,' one who 'would speak first and all.' Wesley's service was at Edinderry, which seems to be in the neighbourhood of Tyrrel's Pass. Many Quakers lived round about, and as it happened to be the time of their General Meeting, a larger number than usual were encountered—'many of all sorts.' This reference is made to the preacher just mentioned, and it may be remembered that he was one in a party who crossed to America with George Fox in the time of Charles II.:—

'I met here with the Journal of William Edmundson, one of their preachers in the last century. If the original equalled the picture (which I see no reason to doubt) what an amiable man was this! His opinions I leave; but what a spirit was here! What faith, love,

gentleness, long-suffering! Could mistake send such a man as this to hell? Not so. I am so far from believing this, that I scruple not to say, "Let my soul be with the soul of William Edmundson."' In Sunderland, a few months later, and after conducting two services in Monkwearmouth Church, Wesley says: 'I spent an agreeable hour at a Quaker's, a man of large substance. His spirit put me in mind of Thomas Keene. May thy last end be like his.'

Wesley's friendly intercourse with the Quakers was maintained throughout his life. In July 1774, he was at Leek in Staffordshire, and immediately on his arrival he had one of those pleasant surprises which added interest to his itinerancy. 'I could not imagine who the Quaker should be that had sent me word he expected me to dinner,' he says; 'and was agreeably surprised to find that it was my old friend, Joshua Strongman of Mount Mellick, in Ireland, whom I had not seen for many years. I found he was the same man still; of the same open, friendly, amiable temper: and everything about him was not costly or fine, but surprisingly neat and elegant.' It appears to have rained during dinner; but the sky brightened, and after the repast 'it seemed the whole town, rich and poor, were gathered together,' while the preacher explained the text, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'

But while he thus was drawn towards individuals, and admired them on account of the Christian spirit which they showed towards himself and his

work, we should make a great mistake if we supposed that Wesley did not set his face against the teaching of the Friends. In the early days of the Revival he found that some were being captivated by what he calls 'that solemn trifle,' Barclay's *Apology*. Wesley held that silent meetings were never heard of in the Christian Church until the Friends favoured them, or at least made them possible. In a letter to Archbishop Secker, quoted by Tyerman, Wesley uses still stronger language: 'Between me and the Quakers there is a great gulf fixed. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper keep us at a wide distance from each other.'

In some instances there might be secession or threatened secession, but such breaches were soon healed. One notable example was that of John Hilton, who after more than a dozen years of good service as a Methodist preacher, turned Quaker, and published a pamphlet in defence of Barclay's *Apology*. Hilton was a man of some talent; but, as the case with all of their new converts, his new associates 'kept him silent for a long time, to his great mortification'; but, as Dr. Moore adds, 'it was the very thing he needed, it was good medicine to heal his sickness.'

Among the curiosities connected with the Methodist Revival are many things which Wesley wrote concerning Quakerism and the Friends.

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